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CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME IX

MADRAS

PART VI
VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPHS
23. NELLITHORAI

P. K. NAMBIAR
OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, MADRAS
AND
T. B. BHARATHI
OF THE MADRAS CIVIL SERVICE
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS

1965

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(Census Report—Vol. No. IX will relate to Madras only. Under this series will be issued the following publications.)

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FOREWORD

Apart from laying the foundations of demography in this sub-continent, a hundred years of the Indian Census has also produced 'elaborate and scholarly accounts of the variegated phenomena of Indian life—sometimes with no statistics attached, but usually with just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to their conclusions'. In a country, largely illiterate, where statistical or numerical comprehension of even such a simple thing as age was liable to be inaccurate, an understanding of the social structure was essential. It was more necessary to attain a broad understanding of what was happening around oneself than to wrap oneself up in 'statistical ingenuity' or 'mathematical manipulation'. This explains why the Indian Census came to be interested in 'many by-paths' and 'nearly every branch of scholarship, from anthropology and sociology to geography and religion'.

In the last few decades, the Census has increasingly turned its efforts to the presentation of village statistics. This suits the temper of the times as well as our political and economic structure. For even as we have a great deal of centralization on the one hand and decentralization on the other, my colleagues thought it would be a welcome continuation of the Census tradition to try to invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood accounts of social structure and social change. It was accordingly decided to select a few villages in every State for special study, where personal observation would be brought to bear on the interpretation of statistics to find out how much of a village was static and yet changing and how fast the winds of change were blowing and from where.

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole state in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive; the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type-studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

A brief account of the tests of selection will help to explain. A minimum of thirty-five villages was to be chosen with great care to represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnic diversity. Of this minimum of thirty-five, the distribution was to be as follows :

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation, e. g., fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry-workers etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multi-ethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500–700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from the major sources of modern communication, such as the district administrative headquarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles, and major rivers. Thus, there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my colleagues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield; and although it accounts to some extent for a certain unevenness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extra-mural rigours of the task. For, the survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals, of small and rural industry and others, was an 'extra', over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey enlarged its scope. At the first Census Conference in September 1959, the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record *in situ* of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village; house types; diet; dress; ornaments and footwear; furniture and storing vessels; common means of transport of goods and passengers; domestication of animals and birds; markets attended; worship of deities; festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March, 1960 by two specimen schedules, one for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which, apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in September, 1959 conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, movable and immovable property, industry, indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities, forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership and organisation of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel', to approach qualitative change through statistical quantities. It had been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusion', at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census operations, but once the Census count itself was left behind in March, 1961, a series of three regional seminars in Trivandrum [May 1961], Darjeeling and Srinagar [June 1961], restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-devised statistical tables was once again recognised. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered and also because the 'Consanguinity' Schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected of these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as inter-related processes, and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion through land-reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and cultural change. Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December, 1961 when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commission rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve: to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceeded that the Survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this Monograph have been printed in an Appendix.

New Delhi,
July 30, 1964.

A. MITRA,
Registrar General, India.

PREFACE

The preparation of Village Survey Monographs is one of the supplementary studies of 1961 Census. Sri A. Mitra, Registrar General has in his foreword given the reader a general background of the Survey. Forty villages were chosen for the survey in Madras State and the Monograph on Nellithorai is the twenty third of the series.

Nellithorai is a Tribal village situated in a secluded corner of Coimbatore district. Irulars are its predominant tribal community who live in the interior forest adjoining the village. Their conditions, despite their contact with the non-tribals, have not improved to any extent.

The village mainly depends on agriculture. Arecanut cultivation is prominent here. Occupationally the villagers are immobile which, in particular, accounts for their economic backwardness.

P. K. NAMBIAR

LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY

1.	Ayyangarkulam *	...	Chingleput District
2.	Sunnambukulam	...	,,
3.	Lakkinayakkanpatti	...	South Arcot District
4.	Thadagam *	...	,,
5.	Arkavadi	...	,,
6.	Hasanamapettai	...	North Arcot District
7.	Paravakkal	...	,,
8.	Arkasanahalli *	...	*Salem District*
9.	Kanakagiri *	...	,,
10.	Pappanaickenpatti *	...	,,
11.	Aladipatti *	...	,,
12.	Iswaramoorthipalayam *	...	,,
13.	Kumbalam	...	,,
14.	Nellithorai**	...	Coimbatore District
15.	Hallimoyar *	...	Nilgiris District
16.	Kinnakorai	...	,,
17.	Vilpatti *	...	Madurai District
18.	Sirumalai	...	,,
19.	Periyur	...	,,
20.	Thiruvalavayanallur	...	,,
21.	*Thenbaranadu* *	...	*Tiruchirapalli District*
22.	Thiruvellarai *	...	,,
23.	Ariyur	...	,,
24.	Kadambangudi *	...	Thanjavur District
25.	Vilangulam	...	,,
26.	Kunnalur *	...	,,
27.	Kodiakkarai	...	,,
28.	Golwarpatti	...	Ramanathapuram District
29.	Visavanoor *	...	,,
30.	Athangarai *	...	,,
31.	Ravanasamudram *	...	Tirunelveli District
32.	Pudukulam *	...	,,
33.	Alwarkarkulam	...	,,
34.	Kilakottai *	...	,,
35.	Odaimarichan	...	,,
36.	Kuvalaikanni	...	,,
37.	Koottumangalam *	...	Kanyakumari District
38.	Kadathuchery *	...	,,
39.	Kottuthalazhamkulam *	...	,,
40.	Kadukkara *	...	,,

**Already published*   ***The present volume (No. 23 of the series)*

VILLAGE SURVEY REPORT

ON

NELLITHORAI

Field Study:	...	...	S. M. PRABHAKARAN, B.COM., (HONS.,) *Research Assistant.*
Photographs:	...	...	N. D. RAJAN, *Photographer.*
Maps:	...	...	A. RAJAMANI, *Draughtsman.*
Sketches:	...	...	A. RAMADOSS *Artist.*

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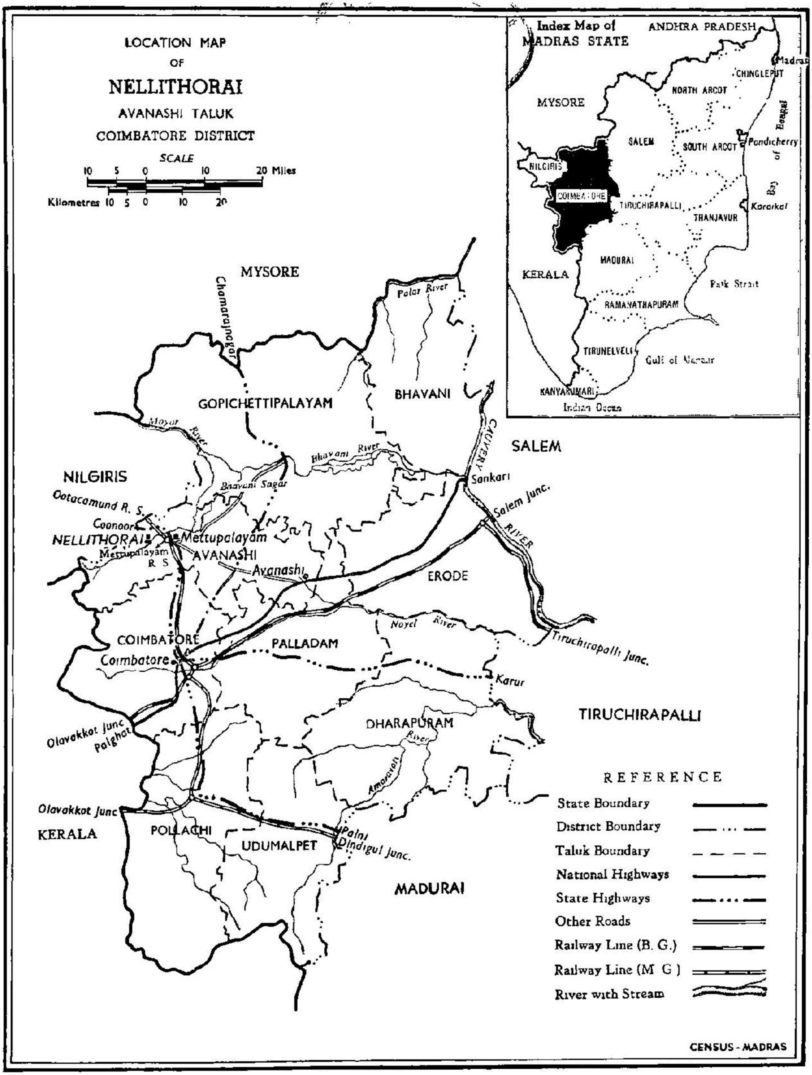
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TIRUCHIRAPALLI
Karaikal
THANJAVUR
MADURAI
KERALA
Palk Strait
RAMANATHAPURAM
TIRUNELVELI
Gulf of Manaar
KANYAKUMARI
Indian Ocean
MYSORE
Chamarajnagar
Palar River
GOPICHETTIPALAYAM
BHAVANI
Moyar River
CAUVERY
SALEM
Bhavani River
NILGIRIS
Bhavani Sagar
Sankari
Ootacamund R. S.
Salem Junc.
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RIVER
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Mettupalayam
AVANASHI
Mettupalayam R S
Avanashi
ERODE
Noyel River
COIMBATORE
PALLADAM
Tiruchirapalli Junc.
Coimbatore
Karur
TIRUCHIRAPALLI
Olavakkot Junc
Palghat
DHARAPURAM
Amaravati River
REFERENCE
State Boundary
District Boundary
Taluk Boundary
National Highways
State Highways
Other Roads
Railway Line (B. G.)
Railway Line (M G)
River with Stream
Olavakkot Junc
KERALA
POLLACHI
UDUMALPET
Palni
Dindigul Junc.
MADURAI
CENSUS - MADRAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The village

A VISITOR to the flourishing town of Mettupalayam in Coimbatore district cannot but admire the majestic blue hills of the Nilgiris, standing loftily in the northern direction. The foot of the hills can be reached within a distance of two to three miles from Mettupalayam, and the intervening green strip provides a beautiful scenery with its *topes* of arecanuts. The unpredictable river Bhavani, which appears to have just emerged from the thick forests, cuts across the town. The portions on either side of the river are connected by a pair of road and rail bridges, lying close to each other. This perennial river Bhavani which runs along the foot of the hills from west to east, drains at this point, a rain-rich catchment area of about 100 sq. miles of the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats and the southern slopes of the Nilgiri hills. During the south-west monsoon season, the river is in floods. A mile to the west of the town, the Coonoor river, flowing from the Nilgiri hills on the north, joins the Bhavani. The long narrow strip of land lying between the Nilgiri hills on the north, the Bhavani river on the south, the Coonoor river on the east and the Western Ghats on the west comprises the revenue village of Nellithorai.

How the village is reached

2. The way upto Mettupalayam from Coimbatore is pleasant. One can go either by rail or by a concrete road. On reaching Mettupalayam, he sees a beautiful scenery towards the north. The Bhavani river in the foreground, the arecanut topes beyond it and the Bagasoora Peak in the background combine to give enchanting beauty to this landscape. Nellithorai is about 3½ miles to the west of Mettupalayam but the village is not visible from this point. The journey to Nellithorai beyond Mettupalayam is not pleasant. To reach the village one has to cross either the river Bhavani from the south or the Coonoor river from the east. Both these rivers have not been bridged near Nellithorai, so as to have direct road access to the village. There is also no path-way leading upto the Coonoor river. As such, to reach Nellithorai, one has to travel about 3½ miles by an unmetalled road from Mettupalayam in the westerly direction, along the southern bank of the Bhavani river, then cross it by a ferry and then walk about four furlongs along another unmetalled road. In summer months, the flow in the river thins out and during that period, it is possible to cross the river by sitting in a double bullock-cart, or by walking across the knee-deep water. The bed of the river is full of mossy pebbles, and so those who brave the risk of crossing the river by walking through the water have to be doubly careful so as not to slip and fall down into the water. To avoid such a contingency, it is usual for a group of four or five persons to join together and cross the river in a row, by holding the hands of each other in a line. Close to the point of crossing of the river, there is an imposing old temple of Badrakaliamman on the southern bank of the river. Though this temple does not lie within the limits of Nellithorai village, the powerful goddess Badrakaliamman is looked upon as a guardian angel by the villagers of Nellithorai. Whenever they pass that way, they stand barefooted before the temple and pray for a minute with folded hands. This temple attracts a number of devotees from places far and near.

Location of the village

3. If we look at the district map of Coimbatore, it could be seen that Nellithorai village actually lies on the north-western corner of the district. To the north of the village is Nilgiris district and to the west is Kerala State. Because of the precipitous mountains standing on these two borders, access to the village from these sides is normally difficult, but recently a pucca ghat-road has been laid from Karamadai, five miles south of Mettupalayam, to the Kundha Hydro-Electric Project area in the Nilgiris, and this road touches the western-most portion of Nellithorai village. This road has a bridge across the Bhavani river. Two of the power houses in the Kundha Project Scheme are being located on this western end of the village in the reserved forest. A jeepable road branches off from this point and comes upto Nellithorai proper, which is at the eastern end of the revenue village. So at present, road access to the village can be had by a circuitous route via., Karamadai, Sundapatti and Gethakadu. The length

of the narrow stretch of land forming Nellithorai revenue village, is about 14 miles from west to east. Its width varies from one to two miles. The land slopes from north to south. Many jungle streams leap from the mountains on the north to join the Bhavani river on the south. More than three-fourth of the village on the western side is covered by dense forests, in which small pockets of Irular settlements are found. This portion is undulatory. The eastern portion of the revenue village is covered by fertile cultivable wet lands. The elevation of the village rises gradually from about 1,000 feet on the east, to about 2,000 feet on the west.

Rainfall and climate

4. The area gets the benefit of both the south-west and north-east monsoons. The former, occurring in the months of June to September is more active. The average annual rainfall is estimated to vary from about 40 to 50 inches. The rainfall increases as one goes from east to west. The climate of the region is generally hot. In summer, due to radiation of heat from the mountains, the mercury remains at a high level and there is sweltering heat.

Flora and fauna

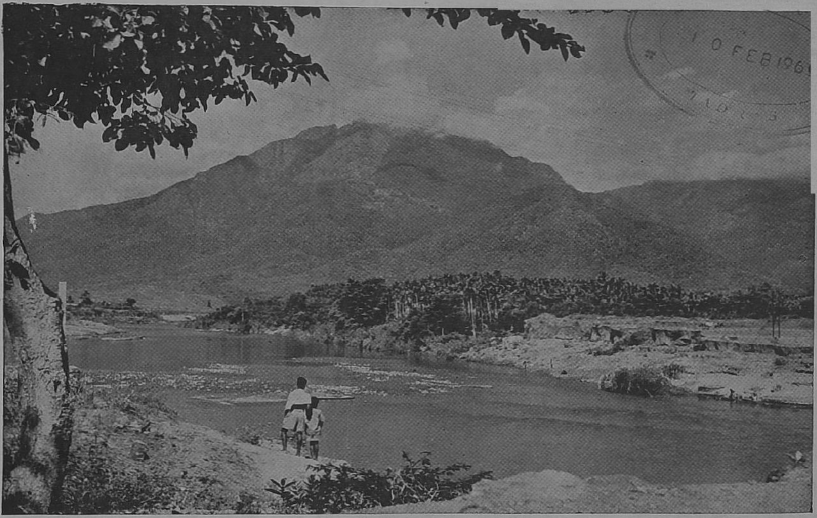
5. As the rainfall increases as one goes from east to west in this tract, the tree growth also increases from east to west. The tropical climate and the copious rainfall favour the growth of tall trees. In some places they grow to heights reaching 100 feet and above. Generally, the denseness of the forest is thick in the lower areas and along river and jungle stream banks. As one goes higher up along the slopes, he meets with less tall trees. Along the river banks, Mathi *(Terminalia Tomeutosa)*, Vagai *(Accacia speciosa)* and Kattuma *(Buchania Latifolia)* grow up well and conceal the river course. In the slopes higher up, timber giving trees like Teak, Rosewood, Ven-teak, Karungali, Poovarasu etc., can be seen. Sandalwood trees also grow well in these parts. The trees which yield minor forest produces like Nelli *(Phyllanthus cannabinus)*, Poochakay, Seekay, Tamarind etc., are plentiful. In the eastern portion of the village where cultivation is undertaken arecanuts are grown in large extent in the upper reaches of the canal. Useful trees like mangoes, tamarind, coconuts etc., can be seen along hedges of cultivable fields.

The denseness of the forest favour preservation of wild life. Elephants in groups roam about from end to end. They occasionally enter cultivated fields and destroy them when the crops are ripe for harvest. They reluctantly make a retreat when they are driven away by the farmers with drums and bugles. Once in a way a member of the herd turns out to be a rogue and threatens to be a menace to the other forest dwellers. Cases of death due to mauling by rogue elephants have happened in the past. The other wild animals found in this forest are tigers, panthers, bears, gaurs, wild oxen, boars etc. Sambur and spotted deer are in plenty. The chief attraction of visitors to these forests is the Malabar squirrel, with its bushy long tail. Its leap from tree to tree will give an impression that it flies. Previously the forest was giving shelter to a large variety of wild animals, but now, consequent on the intrusion of man for the ostensible purpose of constructing Power Houses under the Kundha Hydro Electric Scheme, the grandeur of the forest is getting lost and the wild animals in these forests are getting less and less in number. They have retreated to other areas. The Bhavani river is the abode of a variety of fishes. In the higher reaches, water stagnates in pools and favours breeding of fresh-water fishes. Some half a century back these places used to attract the Britishers and others interested in angling. Catch of large-sized Mahseers weighing even 100 lbs. in this river had been reported. The domestic animals met with in the village are the sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, dogs and asses. The birds seen are the chicken, crows, sparrows, patridges and quails.

Size of the village

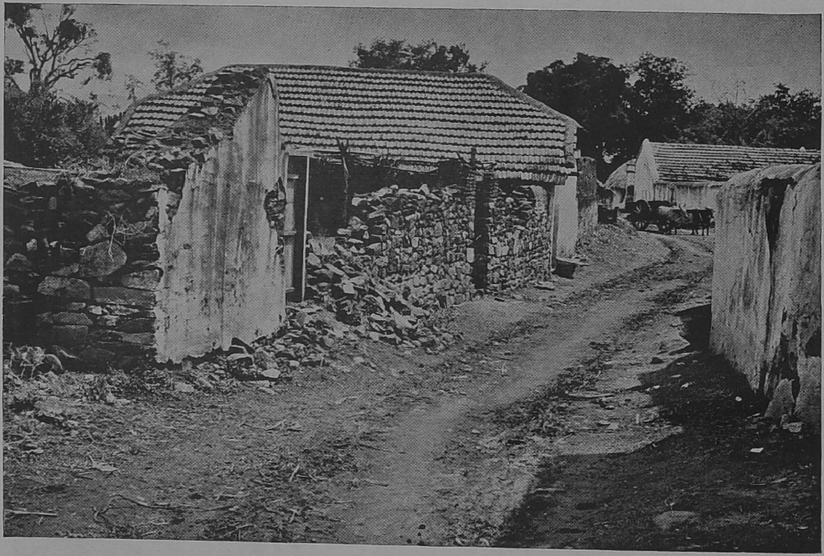
6. Even though the narrow strip of land between the Nilgiri hills on the north and the Bhavani river on the south, is about 20 sq. miles, the area accounted for by the village officers of Nellithorai is only 3.72 sq. miles. Even out of this, an extent of 570 acres is shown by them as covered by Reserved Forest. The area not accounted for by the Village Officers in this long stretch of land is covered by Reserved Forest. The revenue village consists of a large block of cultivable land on the east and a number of broken isolated bits in the midst of the forest on the west. These isolated bits are entirely occupied by a Scheduled Tribe, called Irulars. The revenue village consists of the following ten hamlets, besides Nellithorai proper:

1. Sengal
2. Sithukuni
3. Sundapatti
4. Manar
5. Kovapathy
6. Kil Pillur
7. Mel Pillur
8. Gethakadu
9. Veerakkal
10. Unjalarai Kombai



A scenery of the Nilgiris Hills and the Bhavani river as seen from Mettupalayam. Nellithorai village lies at the foot of the hills beyond the river.

To reach Nellithorai one has to cross the river Bhavani by a ferry. See the shape of the boat.



A street in Nellithorai.

Nellithorai proper contains 103 households belonging mostly to Okkaligas, and a few other minor castes like Vellalas, Valayars, Koravars, Shanars, Asaris, Vannans, Chakkiliars etc. The other hamlets, which are actually interior forest settlements, are habitated by Irulars. Besides the ten hamlets cited above another isolated bit of land on the north-eastern corner is added to the revenue village. This bit contains the Adderly Railway Station, on the Mettupalayam-Ootacamund mountain-railway line. The elevation of this bit of land is about 2,000 feet, and to reach this place, the Village Officers of Nellithorai go via., Mettupalayam. The Adderly Railway Station, because of its situation, does not serve Nellithorai. It serves only the adjoining plantation estates in the Nilgiris district. The nearest railway station serving the people of Nellithorai is Mettupalayam. In the arecanut *topes* lying to the north east of Nellithorai proper, a few Irulars acting as watchmen for the *topes*, live in isolated farm-sheds. Although the Irulars form the major community in the entire village with 153 households, the Okkaligas form the dominating community with 64 households. Because of their aloofness and backwardness, the Irulars have practically no voice in the economic and political field.

Settlement history

7. The Irulars are stated to be the earliest inhabitants of these forests. They belong to a Scheduled Tribe of the State. They are said to be pre-Dravidian in origin, and they are as old as these forests. The community, which came subsequently to settle permanently in the area, is the Okkaligas, who say that they belong to the Hoysala dynasty which ruled parts of Kongunad in the 12th century. The Okkaligas, who belong to an agricultural community of Mysore, settled in the forest marginal lands, disafforested those areas, and started cultivation. Some of the Okkaligas of this village especially the Lingayath sect of the Okkaligas, however believe that they came to these parts from Mysore only during the time of Tippu Sultan. The following legend is told by them on their migration from Mysore. It appears, Tippu Sultan wanted to marry an Okkaliga bride. The Okkaligas consented to it at first due to fear of the fanatic king, but subsequently decided to run away. So they dressed up a dog like a bride, left it in the house and then ran away towards the south by the night. They were, it seems, chased by the Muslim troops but luckily there were floods in the river as soon as the Okkaligas crossed it. The Muslim troops finding it not possible to cross the river, returned to Mysore and the Okkaligas peacefully settled in the forest marginal areas. The authenticity of this story is highly doubtful but the fact remains that the legend is current among them even now. Soon after the Okkaligas started reclaiming the forest lands to make them fit for cultivation and diverted a channel from the Coonoor river to irrigate certain areas in the village, the real prosperity of the village started. It attracted some other caste people like the Vellala Gounders, Chakkiliyars etc., for engaging themselves in agricultural labour and some other serving caste-men like Navithan, Vannan, Asari etc. Though the village contains a vast stretch of fertile lands, the area was largely malarial till 10 years ago. So the population of the village did not rise to the extent it should have. Some households owning lands even went out to reside in Mettupalayam and other neighbouring places on account of the fear of malaria. But in the last 10 years due to Malaria Eradication Programme, this scourge is under control and those families living elsewhere started coming back to the village to live in it. So in recent years, a population growth is noticed. Due to the location of two Power Houses in the western parts of the village, a number of households working in the Project came to live near the project-site. These project camps have grown into large sizes but when our survey was undertaken in 1961–62 they were not there and so no one was returned from those camp settlements. As to Nellithorai proper, it is confirmed by the villagers that some 100 years back, it was located on a site close to the ferry. The site was affected due to floods in the river and so the villagers decided to shift their village-site to the present one, which is about four furlongs to the west of the old one. At present, the old Malleeswara temple only remains in the old site.

Important public places

8. The present village-site of Nellithorai proper lies within a furlong of the north bank of the Bhavani river but the site is at a high level and above the maximum flood level. The villagers take their drinking water from the river. There are also one or two drinking water wells which have been sunk recently in the village-site. The village burial ground is quite adjacent to the river and those who choose to cremate the dead bodies do so on the dry bed of the river, a little farther off. Besides the Badrakaliamman temple which lies outside the revenue limits of Nellithorai, the village has eight temples. These

TABLE No. I

Settlement History

Caste/Tribe	Total No. of households migrated	Number of households which have migrated						Details of migration			
		Less than one year	1–5 years	6–10 years	11–20 years	21–30 years	31 years and above	Same taluk	Same district	Other districts	Other States
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Irulas	10	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
		...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Chakkiliar	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Koravar	3	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	16	...	5	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...
		...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	...
		...	...	4	...	...	...	4	...	...	...
		...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
		...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	7	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
		...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
		...	...	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Valayan	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
		...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Shanar	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Asari	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Konga Vellala	5	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
		...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Nair	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
Brahmin	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
		1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Chettiar	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
Muslims	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
		...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Christians	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total	55	6	18	12	16	3	...	14	25	3	13

temples except the Malleeswarar temple are very small ones. The Malleeswarar temple is a fairly old one and the maintenance of it is carried on with the aid of the revenue derived from a piece of wet land measuring 2.50 acres, said to have been donated by one of the earlier Mysore kings.

The village has an elementary school. This is a single-teacher manned school and managed by the Panchayat Union. The school is housed in a small building recently constructed. The village is served by a recently formed statutory Panchayat. It has no building of its own. It is housed in a small rented building. The Panchayat is affiliated to the Karamadai Panchayat Union. The village has no co-operative society. The village has no post office within it. The post office at Tekkampatti, which is at a distance of about 2 miles from Nellithorai, serves this village also. If any one in the village wants to send a telegram, he has to go to Mettupalayam town.

Interesting features

9. The village of Nellithorai is in one corner of Coimbatore district. It adjoins a dense forest. Isolated bits of the village lie scattered in the interior forest. Some bits are even 14 miles away from the main village. One bit is at a high altitude of about 2,000 feet and is unconnected to the village. A primitive tribe lives in these interior forest pockets. Though they do cultivation of dry crops in the cleared patches, they have not advanced yet from the food-gathering stage. They have some contact with the other people living in Nellithorai. They occasionally go out as agricultural labourers and work for the Okkaligas who own lands in the village. Some tribals even work as paid watchmen in the arecanut *topes*. Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers. Out of the total extent of 1,535 acres of cultivable land in the village, 725 acres are under wet cultivation. Out of this, an extent of 412 acres are under arecanut cultivation which is a special feature of the village. The cultivation of arecanut in this and the adjoining village of Odanthorai has a special significance in the economy of the village. Though the village is within four miles of the municipal town of Mettupalayam, the communication facilities to the village have not improved in the last 50 years. Though a railway station lies within the village, it is not useful to the villagers. Though two Power Houses under a major hydro-electric scheme are under erection, the villagers do not take part in the construction. Nor does the work benefit the villagers in any way. Though the village contains long stretches of arecanut and paddy lands, the ownership of these is mostly with absentee pattadars who live in Mettupalayam and Coimbatore. All these special features observed in Nellithorai have a bearing on the life and economy of the villagers. These will be examined in greater detail in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE

Ethnic Composition

10. Table No. II gives the ethnic composition of the village.

TABLE No. II

Ethnic Composition

Community	Total No. of households	Total persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
HINDUS				
Irulas (S. T.)	153	574	291	283
Chakkiliar (S. C.)	7	29	15	14
Koravar (S. C.)	3	9	6	3
Pandaram (S. C.)	1	4	2	2
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	210	115	95
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	59	27	32
Valayan	5	17	6	11
Shanan	2	8	5	3
Asari	2	11	5	6
Vannan	2	5	2	3
Navithar	1	3	2	1
Sembadavan (Fishermen)	1	4	1	3
Oddar	1	5	3	2
Konga Vellala	6	16	10	6
Nair	1	5	3	2
Brahmin	2	11	5	6
Chettiar	3	17	9	8
Muslims	2	9	6	3
Christians	1	9	6	3
Total	256	1,005	519	486

S.T: Scheduled tribe
S.C: Scheduled caste

Out of 256 households in Nellithorai, 153 belong to Irulars. These tribals live in interior forest settlements in groups of 10 to 15 households and also in solitary farm-steads in the arecanut *topes*. Though they form 57.8 per cent of the households in the village, they have practically no voice in the village administration. Among the people who live in Nellithorai proper, the Okkaligas are dominant. This community has 63 households with a population of 269 persons. It is believed that the Okkaligas are originally migrants from Mysore some centuries back and they are wholly now engaged in agriculture. In this village, they are divided into two sects, namely Gudi Okkaligas and Lingayath Okkaligas. The latter sect has a strength of only 12 households but they are more prosperous than the Gudi Okkaligas. All the Okkaligas speak a slang of Canarese. Next to Okkaligas, the Chakkiliars have seven households. This is a Scheduled Caste of Andhra origin. They speak a slang of Telugu. Their chief occupation is stitching leather. Their usefulness is felt in places where leather-buckets are used for lift-irrigation from wells. They are treated as untouchables and they live separately at one end of the village-site. Next to them in strength comes the Vellala Gounders with six households. These people are not the permanent residents of the village. One had come to the village as a railway gangman at the Adderly Railway Station. The others had come over to the village in search of work. They live separately in isolated farm-steads. Though they are good agriculturists elsewhere in Coimbatore district, the Vellalas of this village do not own any land. The Valayar community with a strength of five households comes next in the composition of the village. The Valayars are treated as a Denotified tribe for the district, but they do not come under Scheduled Castes. The Valayars of this village are engaged as agricultural labourers and as farm servants. The Koravars who have a strength of three households in this village are also treated as belonging to Denotified tribe. They also come under the list of Scheduled Castes, though in their case, untouchability is not so well observed as in the case of Chakkiliyars. The Koravar households in this village are engaged in basket-making. They live close to the caste Hindu houses. The two Shanan households living in this village are engaged as agricultural labourers. Their traditional occupation is tree-tapping. The two Asari households in the village are engaged as blacksmith-cum-carpenters and they do the servicing of agricultural implements for the agriculturists of this village. One of the two Asari

households belongs to Kerala, and he is different from the other Tamilian Asari living in this village. Two Vannan households are engaged in attending to the washing of clothes for villagers. One Sembadavan household which belongs to an inland fishing community is engaged in the traditional occupation of fishing and running the ferry service. One Pandaram, a native of Musiri has come over here as a Forest Guard. His predecessor in office is a Brahmin and he has left over his family in the village after his transfer elsewhere. The other Brahmin living in the village is at Adderly and working as Assistant Station Master. One Oddar household is engaged in agricultural labour though the traditional occupation of this community is stone-breaking and well-digging. The village contains three Chettiar households and out of these, two are pursuing the traditional occupation of business. Apart from two Muslim households, one Nair household is working in Adderly station as railway gangman. The Station Master here is a Christian. But the existence of the railway staff at Adderly is not practically known to the villagers of Nellithorai.

Irulars

11. Irulars belong to a tribe of pre-Dravidian origin. They are treated as a Scheduled Tribe for the entire Madras State. They are also found in parts of Kerala and Mysore. The Irulars form the second largest tribe in Madras State. They are seen in all the districts, but the Irulars of Coimbatore and Nilgiris are found to be ethnically different from the Irulars of Chingleput, South Arcot, North Arcot etc., places. The name Irula is supposed to have been derived from the Tamil word *Irul* which means darkness. This may refer either to the dark jungle in which they live or to their dark complexion. The name might also have been derived from their similarity to Irul trees which are black, strong and well-seasoned. The Irulars of Coimbatore and Nilgiris districts live generally at altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 feet on marginal forest lands and in the adjoining plains. Some are engaged in doing shifting cultivation in cleared forest patches. The shifting cultivation in these parts is called *Kumri* cultivation. In spite of resort to agriculture, they have not yet got over from the primitive food-gathering habits. They collect wild-roots and berries and live on them for the major part of the year. They hunt and snare animals and birds in the forest and eat them. They are utilised by the forest contractors and by the forest-officials, for collecting minor produces and for laying roads, clearing coupes, etc., in the forests. A few of these Irulars have moved over to the adjoining plains and are engaged by the land-owning class as farm-servants and as watchmen. It cannot however be said that they are quite good at doing agricultural labour. By nature, they are lazy and reluctant to do manual labour. They are shy and timid in nature so far as their contact with other civilized people are concerned; but they are very daring within the forest when they meet wild animals.

Religion

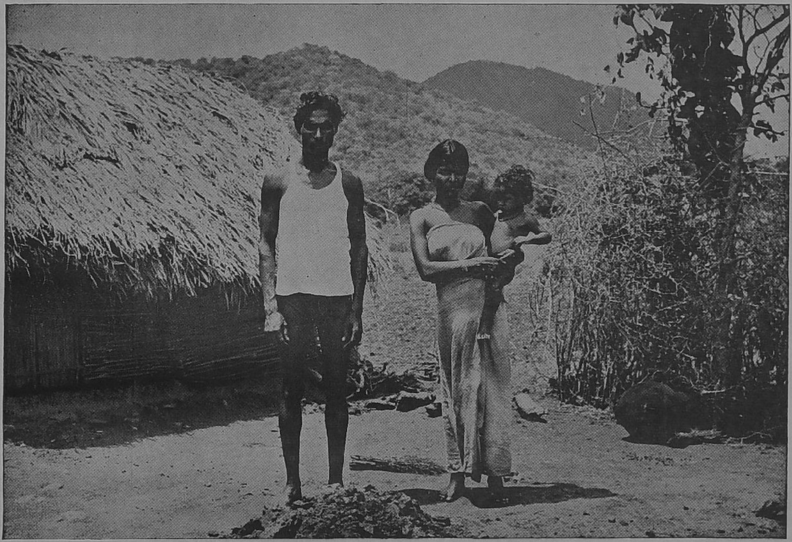
12. The Irulars have animistic tendencies. They worship local deities like Mahakaliamman, Mariamman, Sengothaiamman, Badrakaliamman etc. They also worship sun, moon and mountains. A recent tendency among them however is to visit the Rengaswamy temple at Palamalai and Karamadai and profess Vaishnavism. They have also begun celebrating some of the Tamil festivals observed by the plains people. The mother-tongue of the Irulars is a slang of Tamil which they speak with a peculiar accent and drawl, making their speech difficult of understanding even by Tamilians. In parts adjoining Kerala, as in Attapadi valley, their language is mixed with a number of Malayalam words and in parts adjoining Mysore as in Moyar valley, their language is mixed with a number of Canarese words.

Septs

13. Each Irular hamlet may not exceed more than 10 to 15 households. They call the hamlet as *Pathi*. Each Pathi has a headman called Moopan. The Irulars living in a village are subject to the social discipline of the Moopan. One remarkable feature of the life of the Irulars is their community cohesiveness. Whenever any social function takes place in the house of any of them, all others in that Pathi join together and help each other. Men and women enjoy equal status in this tribe. Descendency is always reckoned by the male line. For purposes of marriage, the tribe is divided into a number of exogamous septs. The names of some of the septs found in Nellithorai are the following:

1. Karunagan	5. Vellai
2. Kuppan	6. Uppili
3. Karatti	7. Devanan
4. Samban	8. Keragan, etc.

Among these septs, the members belonging to Karunagan sept enjoy a slightly higher status than the rest. The people belonging to this sept usually officiate as priests and as masters of ceremonies.



An Irular couple.

An Irula woman with child.

Marriage customs

14. The Irulars marry their daughters only after they attain puberty. The boys are generally married when they are past 20. They allow remarriage of widows but they prohibit the marriage of a widow with the brothers of her deceased husband. All these cases of remarriages, are considered more as concubinages than as regular marriages. Polygamy is recognised and practised in a limited extent. Polyandry is not known to them. For incompatibility, barrenness, and adultery they allow divorce. The Moopan assisted by the elders of the Pathis to which the parties belong, sit and decree such divorces. Adultery within the tribe is chastised with fines, but adultery with anybody outside the tribe usually ends in excommunication. The Irulars contract marriages in two ways. According to the traditional type, before a boy wants to marry a girl, the parents contact each other and if they agree, the boy goes to the girl's house with a head-load of fire-wood. The boy is allowed to live with the girl in a separate house for one or two days like husband and wife. If after the trial they agree to marry, they announce their consent and the marriage is then celebrated by inviting all the friends and relatives and giving them a feast. In the ceremonial type of marriage, which appears to be a later adoption, the bridegroom's party approaches the parents of the girl, announce their *Kulam* or sept and ask for the hand of the girl. If accepted by the girl's father, a bride-price of Rs. 25 is paid and a day for the betrothal is announced. A date is then fixed for the marriage and on the appointed day, the bridegroom's party comes to the village of the bride and takes the bride and their people ceremoniously to the bridegroom's place. The marriage then takes place in the bridegroom's house. A *Tali* consisting of a string of black-beads is tied by the bridegroom around the neck of the bride. This is followed by a grand feast. The guests make cash presents in the afternoon. A ceremony called *Thanneerthuraipothal* is then celebrated. In this, the newly married couple visit a water-point in the village accompanied by the people of their own age and on the way make a lot of mirth. The marriage is usually over after a return feast in the bride's place for a limited number of guests. The bride then comes to live with her husband in a newly constructed hut in the village of the bridegroom. On enquiry, it is learnt that the traditional type of marriage by trial is not now observed but cases are not wanting in which a boy and a girl eloped and got married later.

Death customs

15. When a death takes place in any Irular Pathi, messages are immediately sent to friends and relatives. No cooking is done until the dead body is removed. When all the friends and relatives arrive, the corpse is bathed and taken to the burial ground in a decorated bier called Padai. Drums and music are played on the way. Enroute, the corpse is kept for some time at a place halfway through and group dancing is done. If the dead person happens to be a married man, the *Karugumani* which symbolized for Tali worn by his wife is cut and removed. A small tuft of the widow is also cut and carried to the grave along with the corpse. The Irulars do not cremate the dead. They bury the dead in a sitting position, with legs crossed. A lamp is lit and placed before it and the niche closed with planks and earth. In former days, it is said that they also used to have pot-burial in which the corpse is laid in a sitting posture in a large sized open mouthed earthen pot called *Thazhi* and the *Thazhi* buried after sealing its mouth. The Irulars do not celebrate any commemoration ceremony or Karumathi on the sixteenth day. Instead all those in any one Pathi used to join together to celebrate what is called Kanchi Cheeru in which rice gruel (*kanji*) is prepared and offered to all the dead souls. The people belonging to each sept or *Kulam* have a separate shed which they call as a Goppamanai, in which a big pebble is placed on the death of each member of the clan. Inside the Goppamanai pebbles representing males are kept separately from the pebbles representing females. The Irulars are very strict in observing pollution. They believe that pollutions occur when a child birth takes place or when a woman is under menstruation. The Irulars believe that wild animals can be kept off from the Pathi if they remain pure and unpolluted.

They are generally clever in killing wild animals with crude but simple weapons. Some of them are good Shikaries. It is said that a few of them even possess unlicensed muzzle loading guns, which they hide somewhere in the forests. They occasionally engage themselves in going out on hunting trips. They call these expeditions as *Kalappai Vettai*. This consists in a number of members flanking on either side of a pathway frequented by wild animals while a third party drives the games through this path by making huge noises with drums. Those hiding on either side of the pathway aim at the animals when they run past them. The kill is shared by all who take part in the expedition.

Okkaligas

16. Next to Irulars, the community which ranks in strength in this village is the Okkaligas. The Okkaligas are said to be once migrants from Mysore. They say, they are the decendants of Ballal Raja of Hoysala dynasty. It is recorded in history that the Hoysalas ruled parts of Kongunad in the 12th and 13th centuries. During this period, they should have come over here and got settled. They are good agriculturists. They selected marginal lands adjoining forests, reclaimed them and started cultivation. They are now found in parts of Gobichettipalayam, Avanashi and Coimbatore taluks of Coimbatore district and also in parts of Madurai and Salem districts. In Madurai district they also go by the name of Kappiliyans. They are a set of peace-loving quiet people. They speak a corrupt form of Kanarese. The Okkaligas now found in Madras State are divided into a number of endogamous sects. These are :

1. Gudi Okkaligas
2. Gangadi Okkaligas
3. Keeraikara or Kempatti Okkaligas
4. Kunju Okkaligas
5. Gowri Okkaligas
6. Kamatti Okkaligas
7. Bai Okkaligas
8. Sanu Okkaligas
9. Lingayat Okkaligas

Of these, the Gudi Okkaligas only are found in large numbers. The Okkaligas living in Nellithorai belong mostly to this sect of Gudi Okkaligas. Twelve households however belong to the sect of Lingayat Okkaligas. They wear a replica of Lingam in their necks. They are staunch Saivites and pure vegetarians. They do not eat in the houses of Gudi Okkaligas who are non-vegetarians. Though the marriage ceremonies and other rituals of the Lingayat Okkaligas are similar to those of Gudi Okkaligas, they do not generally intermarry with the latter. However in recent times, due to dearth of brides, one or two Lingayat Okkaligas have taken brides from the sect of Gudi Okkaligas.

The Gudi Okkaligas are divided into a number of exogamous septs among them, for purposes of marriage alliances. The septs found in this village are the following :

1. Kuthieru
2. Kentheru
3. Kovery
4. Boveru
5. Vellieru
6. Thimmai Gowda
7. Pattakaran
8. Desia Gowda
9. Neerala Gowda etc.

Each sept has a clan deity and they have some totemistic tendencies also.

The caste head of the Okkaligas for the village is called 'Oor Goundan'. He has a peon called Bandari. The Okkaligas living in a village are subject to the social discipline of the Oor Goundan. Above the Oor Goundan is the Katta Manae who is the head of ten villages. He looks into disputes which are not normally disposed off by the Oor Goundan. Above the Katta Manae is the Pattakaran who is the ultimate authority in all social matters. Actually however there are three Pattakarans in these parts and the one at Mottampatti is the chief Pattakaran.

Customs and manners

17. The way in which birth, death ceremonies are performed by the Okkaligas is described below.

Birth ceremonies

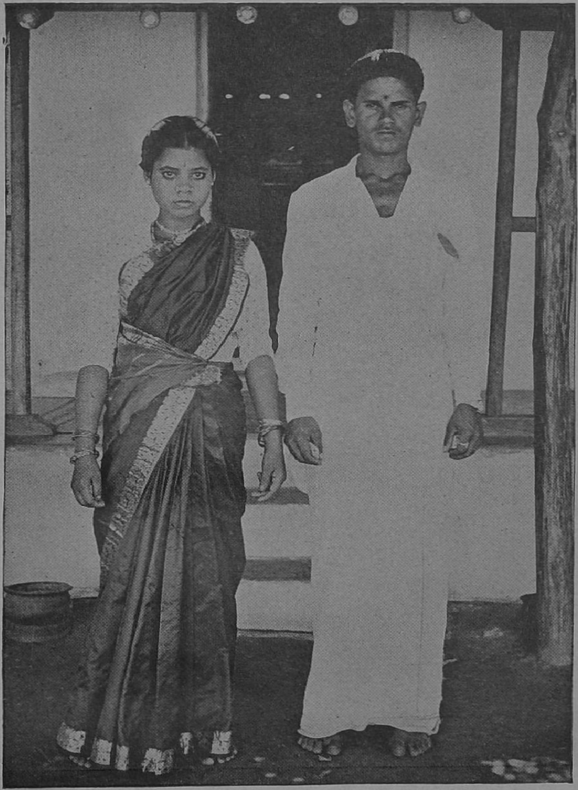
The first two deliveries usually take place in the mother's place of the girl. On the seventh month of pregnancy, relations are invited and a feast given. The pregnant mother is given new clothes and taken to the house of her mother. Delivery usually takes place in a room of the house. Elderly experienced ladies help the delivering mother. The umblical chord etc., are buried in the backyard. Pollution is observed for nine days. The mother and the child are taken back on the tenth day after a bath. Some rich families invite Brahmin *purohits* and do *Punniavasan.* Poor people content themselves by sprinkling *Gomayam* (cow's urine) inside the house.

Puberty ceremony

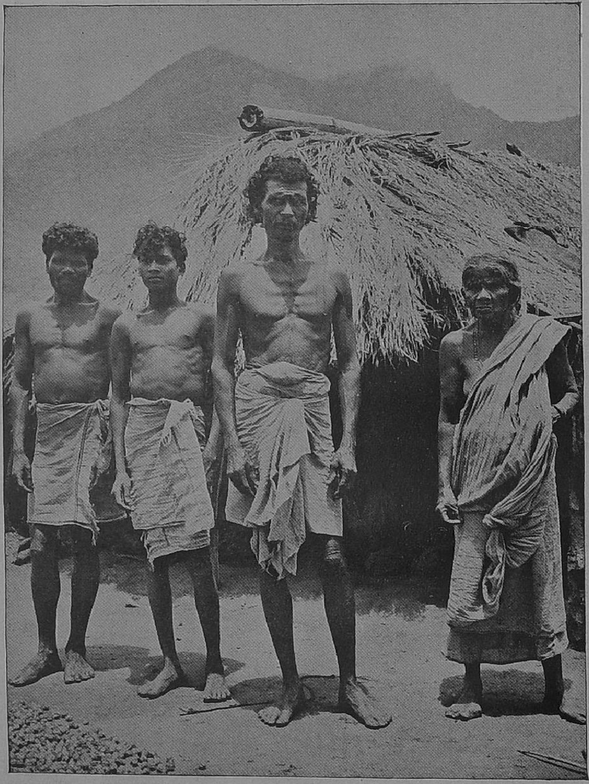
As soon as a girl attains puberty, the maternal uncle is sent for and asked to erect a small shed inside the house with stalk of *cumbu.* On the third day, the girl is given a ceremonious bath and taken back to the house. The hut, in which she lived, is dismantled and burnt. After about 20 days, on a convenient auspicious day, the relatives are invited and given a feast. The relatives in turn give presents to the girl in the form of sweets, clothes and jewels.

Marriage ceremonies

The marriage among Okkaligas usually takes place only after the girl attains puberty and the boy is 20. The initiative for a marriage should always come from the groom's side. They go in a party and ask for the hand of the girl. If both the parties agree to the alliance, a day is fixed and the groom's party asked to come back again on that day. On this day, the groom's party visits the bride's place again and partakes in a feast called *Paruppuchoru.* After the feast



Newly wedded Okkaliga pair.



The Valayars.

the bridegroom's party spends the night in the bride's place. If anyone in either party has any bad dreams on that night, the matter may not be pursued further. If, however, they do not have any bad dreams, a day for the marriage is fixed and they start preparations for it. The usual bride-price Rs. 12.75 is paid by the groom's side along with rice, dhall, arecanut, ghee etc. The entire cost of the marriage is usually borne by the groom's side. The actual marriage takes place only in the house of groom. On the day prior to the marriage, the bride is given a ceremonious bath and asked to wear a special ornament called Onnumani. This is a Kanarese name for a string of beads made of gold and pure coral. Such a string of beads is usually kept by the Oor Goundan and the parties who require it take it from him as loan for the occasion. The assembled guests in the bride's place are given a feast. All the guests in turn are expected to make cash presents, called *Moi*. Meanwhile the bridegroom's party arrives in the bride's place to escort the bride and their relations. They bring along with them new clothes and jewels intended for the bride. The ceremony in which the bride is given a send-off is called *Panthatti Viduthal* and this will take place in the presence of the Oor Goundan. On the day fixed for the marriage, a number of ceremonies are undergone. It is not usual for a Brahmin *Purohit* to officiate in the marriages of Okkaligas. A priest in their own community called Ganikkaran officiates on such occasions. In Nellithorai there is no Ganikkaran but the one living in the adjoining village of Vekkampatti is requisitioned for this. The bride and the bridegroom are seated on a pair of special planks called *Asamanai*. The planks can be taken on loan from the Oor Goundan. Before they are put to use they are washed, tied with sacred turmeric threads and sprinkled with Navathanyam. One of the ceremonies undergone after the Tali-tying ceremony is for the couple to look in the northern direction for the Arunthathi star, after stepping on a grinding stone. A feast takes place in the afternoon and after this, the couple start for the bride's place.

On the day prior to the marriage, the Okkaligas celebrate a special ceremony called *Kenakandi* to initiate the ceremonies that are to follow. This is done both in the bride's place and bridegroom's place separately. The ceremony consists in a group of seven persons bringing water from the nearest water-point. During this trip to the water-point, they carry a specially made bamboo basket containing coconut leaf, coconut flower, *Navathanyam* (nine grains) coconut, plantains etc. The village musicians head the party and the village dhoby spreads cloth throughout for the party to walk over the entire length. A canopy of cloth, whose ends are tied to four sticks held by four persons, is held over the heads of the party. The centre of the canopy cloth will also be held aloft with a stick by some one. Before the party fills up the pots with water, a pooja is performed. On the way back, the party visits a Pillayar temple. Some one in the crowd may get possessed on the way and he may even deliver oracles. The others in the crowd indulge in shouting to make a shrill drawling noise and create an ecstacy in the person who got possessed. The sacred water so brought home is placed first in a sacred room in the marriage house. All worship it. The pot is then placed in the *Pandal* in which marriage takes place.

Death ceremonies

18. Soon after death takes place, intimation is sent to relations through Chakkiliyars. The burial usually takes place on the same day and if that is not possible on the next day positively. Till the dead body is removed from the house, it is placed in the central hall. The Parayars from the adjoining village are sent for and they play music in front of the bereaved man's house. They spread a piece of cloth and all the guests who come to this house for the condolence drop a few coins on the cloth and the amount so collected is shared by the dhoby, barber and the Parayars. A new cloth called *Kodi* is purchased by the heirs of the deceased and spread over the corpse. In the case of death of a married woman, two new clothes are purchased and spread, one on behalf of the parents of the girl and another on behalf of the husband. The body, before it is removed to the burial ground is given a bath and applied with perfumes and decorated with flowers. It is also given a face shave in the case of males. When a husband dies his wife is adorned with new clothes and asked to sit by the side of the corpse for conducting certain ceremonies in the fashion of a marriage. A pooja is then performed for the corpse and the coconut, plantain etc., used for it are given to the barber. Depending upon the status of the family, a bier is constructed and decorated. The cost of decorating this bier is borne by the daughter of the deceased. While the bier is being carried, copper coins and puffed rice are thrown over it. Okkaligas usually bury their dead unless the person was suffering from some incurable diseases like small-pox, or tuberculosis. The personal belongings of the

deceased like mat, pillow, etc., are thrown away at a place called Idukadu, half-way to the burial ground. It is also usual for the wife of the deceased to accompany the corpse upto the Idukadu and then return home after breaking away her bangles. In the burial ground, a pit is dug north-south and the head of the body will be placed towards the south with face upwards. The first sod of earth is pushed into the pit by the eldest son in the case of a burial of a male and by the youngest son in the case of a female. On the day next to burial a few members of the bereaved family visit the burial ground and pour a little milk and ghee near the place of burial. On the 16th day, the last day obsequies are performed. All relatives take part in it. It is on this day, the Tali of the widow of the deceased is untied.

The Okkaligas allow divorces for extreme cases of incompatibility and adultery. Divorced women are allowed to remarry. Widows can also remarry. But in such cases, the ceremonies will be simple. The Gudi Okkaligas are mostly Vaishnavities but they also worship Siva and Murugan. They observe all the Hindu festivals like Deepavali, Pongal, Sivarathri etc.

Valayars

19. The name of Valayan is supposed to be derived from *Valai* which means a net, because it appears in olden days, they were using nets to catch games in jungle. No one in that community now uses nets for snaring birds and animals, but the name continues as such. The Valayars are classed as belonging to Denotified Tribe. They are a fiery type of people indulging often in committing thefts, dacoities and cattle-lifting. Now after the introduction of prohibition they have lessened their activities in committing thefts and are diverting more attention to distillation of illicit arrack. They are medium to tall in stature and well-built. The Valayars of Coimbatore district are divided into a number of endogamous sects, the chief of which are the Mutraja Valayars, Vannia Valayars and Pillu Valayars. They are found largely in Avanashi, Coimbatore, Palladam and Udumalpet taluks. The Valayars in Nellithorai village belong to the sub-sect of Mutrajas. It cannot be said whether this sub-sect of Mutraja Valayars have anything to do with the community of Mutrajas of Andhra State, because the Mutraja Valayars of Coimbatore district speak only Tamil. In Nellithorai village, they are mostly employed as agricultural labourers. They enjoy a low status in the village, but they are not treated as untouchables. They are even employed as domestic servants by the Okkaligas. The Mutraja Valayars are divided among themselves into a number of exogamous septs for the purpose of marriage alliances. The names of the septs met with are the following:

Kolamutti	Pothi
Mayan	Panikan
Perunjali	Paradesi

For contracting marriages, they pay bride-price which is said to be as high as Rs. 55. Some collect prices even higher than this amount. They celebrate their marriages in the bride's houses. Their marriage customs resemble in many respects the customs followed by the Okkaligas of village. The size of the Tali used by Mutraja Valayars is big and horn-shaped, whereas the Tali used by Vannia Valayars is coin shaped. They freely allow divorces and remarriages. They generally bury their dead, but very elderly persons are cremated. They worship Kurupparayan, Mariamman etc., gods and observe most of the festivals relating to the Hindus of the locality.

Vellala Gounders

20. The Vellala Gounders, a hard-working, thriving, agricultural community found in predominance in Coimbatore district is in minority in this village. Their mother-tongue is Tamil. Only six households of this community live in this village and that too in a temporary capacity. No one owns any property in the village. These families seem to have come over to this village only in recent times in search of work. By the time our survey was over, some have even left the village. Because they are hard-working, they are in demand wherever labour is needed. Although in this village they play only subsidiary role, socially they keep a little aloof. They do not mix so well with the Okkaligas, presumably due to their complex in feeling that their castemen in other places in the district are better off. The toiling capacity of Vellala Gounders is proverbial and they are very frugal in all ways except when they are engaged in party factions. Their love of land is intense. The entire family from aged persons to children work ceaselessly on their land and get the best out of it. They marry their daughters only very late, so that they could be kept as working members in their own family for as long a period as possible. Their marriage

ceremonies are so much abridged that they are over by one night. The friends and relations assemble in the marriage house only in the evening after working in their respective fields. They are given a feast and the ceremonies are over by day-break enabling them to go back to their fields for work again. In Tamil the say is "விடிந்தால் தீர்ந்தது வெள்ளாளன் கல்யாணம்" which means that a marriage in a Vellalan's house is over if the day breaks. Another notable feature in their marriage budget is the zealous collection of *Moi* (presents in cash) from all the friends and relatives from whom that is due. If any Vellala has been making cash presents (Moi) to his friends and relations, he expects them all to be returned to him to the very pie, incase of any function in his house. If unfortunately there is no likelihood of any function taking place in his house in the near future and if he is in need of mony he would invite them all for a nominal feast and collect the outstanding 'Moi' due to him.

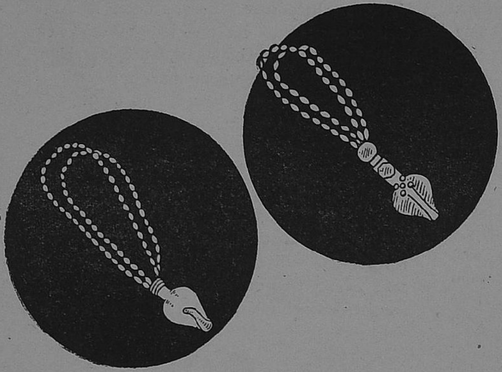
They are usually brown in colour, robust and well built. The males are usually found with a waist cloth and a turban. Women of older generation wear only sarees. Younger women however wear blouses also. At the time of marriage 'Tali' which is as big as a middle sized frog is tied; but the ladies soon dispense with the wearing of it. Instead, they tie a symbolic light yellow thread closely round their neck. They would even pawn the Tali to get a loan or go to the extent of selling it. There is a belief among the Vellala Gounders that an age-old Tali worn by several other married women before is more auspicious than a newly made one, for the purpose of tying in a marriage. So in many families the Tali worn by a daughter-in-law would be the one worn by her mother-in-law. They do not generally invite Brahmins to officiate the marriage ceremonies. They have instead their own men called Arumai-karans who act as master of ceremonies. A superior sect of barbers called *Kudi Navithans* also play a prominent part in their marriage ceremonies. Widow marriage is not allowed among the Vellalas. Widows however young they may be, are forced to wear white sarees. Divorce and remarriage are unknown to them. The old custom of marrying very aged girls to younger boys is now dying out.

Chakkiliyars

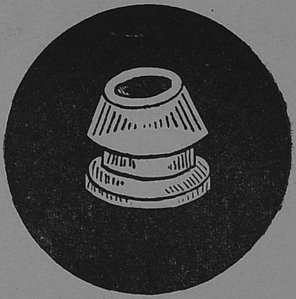
21. The Chakkiliyars are also called as Madharies or as Arunthathiers in these parts. They are considered as the lowest among the Harijans. Because of their unclean habits and of their eagerness to eat the flesh of dead cow and bulls, the other community people abhor their contact and make them live separately. As in most other villages, the living quarters of the Chakkiliyars are a little isolated from the locality of the Caste Hindus. The Chakkiliyars must have come a long time back from the Telugu country. They speak a slang of Telugu mixed freely with Tamil and Canarese words. Their traditional occupation is stitching leather. In former days, before the wells were fitted with electric pump sets, baling was done with leather buckets. These required mending frequently and the Chakkiliyars lived by mending the leather baling buckets. Now their usefulness on this work is getting diminished. But they still retain their secondary occupation of playing drums and bugles during festive and ceremonious occasions. They worship both Siva and Vishnu. They also worship many other local deities. There are several exogamous septs among them and marriage alliances within the same sept are strictly avoided by them. Widow marriages and divorces are freely allowed in their community.

Dress

22. The Irular men wear dress like other people of the lower income groups. They wear a *Langotti* around the loins and a towel over the shoulder. Some wear shirts and half-shirt or banian. The Irular women, on the other hand, are easily distinguishable by their mode of dress. They tie a long piece of cloth or saree around their waist, continue one end of it to cross their breast and make a knot near the left arm-pit. The shoulders look bare. No one wears blouse or jacket. The sarees worn by them are either white or coloured. In comparison to others in the village, the Okkaligas appear to be better dressed. Their men folk wear dhoties and towels. Many of them wear also shirts. Their women-folk wear sarees of six yards and nine yards and put on blouses also. When they wear sarees of nine yards length, they adjust the fold towards the back and throw the pallav over the left shoulder. But when women of younger generation wear sarees of six yards, the fold comes to the front. The people of other minor communities in this village are not different from the Okkaligas in their manner of dressing.



'Mayir Matti' worn by Irulas



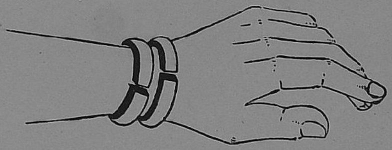
'Kadolai' an ear-stud worn by Irulas

Ornaments

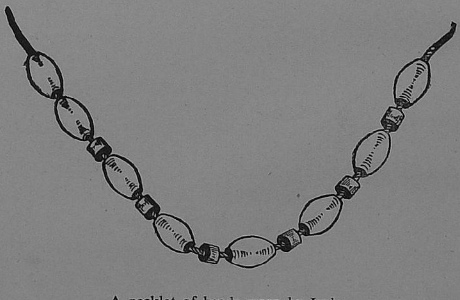
23. In the matter of ornaments, only richer households possess gold jewels. The others wear jewels made of silver or other cheap base metal. They also wear glass beads and corals. The jewels worn by the Irulars are listed below :

Ears	...	Kathu Olai and Mayir Matti
Neck	...	Pasimani, Chain and Vellimani
Nose	...	Mookku Pottu
Wrist	...	Valayal and Kappu
Toes	...	Minji

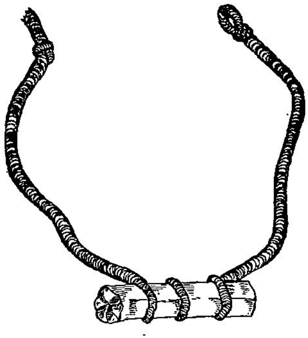
Sketches showing the shapes of the ornaments can be found in the adjoining pages. Almost all communities are fond of wearing *Thayathus* (Talisman) hooked to a string and worn in the neck. For children, the Thayathus are worn in the loins. The shape of the Talis worn by the different communities are shown in the sketches. Most men of younger ages, crop their hairs. Even Irulars living in interior settlements crop their hair. A few, however, grow their hair long and tie it into a tuft. The women-folk part their hair in the middle and tie it into a tight knot at the back with a small twist, called *Kondai*. The Irular women apply oil to their hair and keep it well kempt. Many of the ladies both among Irulars and non-Irulars are seen with tattoo marks in their arms.



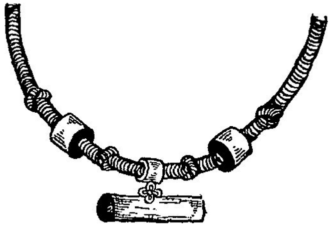
Silver bracelets worn by Irulas



A necklet of beads worn by Irulas



Thayathu worn by Irulas

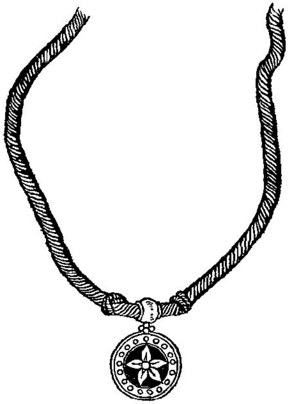


Thayathu worn by Chakkiliyas

Utensils, Implements and furniture

24. The Irulars possess very few household articles. They have only the minimum number of vessels required for cooking. These are mostly mud vessels but some have one or two pieces of brass and aluminium vessels. They store the provisions which they buy occasionally from Nellithorai and other places in bamboo-cut cylinders. A few of them own kerosene wick lamps. The articles possessed by Okkaligas vary largely according to one's status. The poorer households own only the minimum household articles. The vessels are made of brass, aluminium and mud. Some of the households possess kerosene hurricane lanterns. For bedding most people use *Korai* mats. A few use mattresses stuffed with silk-cotton. Bamboo baskets and winnowing trays (Muram) are found in all the households. Wooden laddles (Agappai) and churning sticks (Mathu) could also be seen in almost all the households. Country cots made of bamboos and coir are possessed by a few households. Table No. III gives a picture of the furniture and other consumer goods owned by the households of the various communities.

Thayathu worn by Chakkiliyas



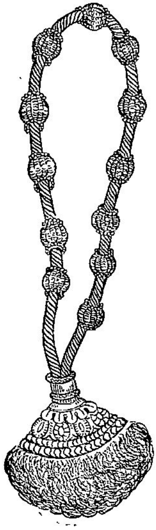
Thali of Oddars

TABLE No. III

Possession of Consumer Goods

Caste/Tribe	Number of households possessing												
	Table	Chair	Bench	Sofa set	Cot	Gun	Easy chair	Almirah	Box	Stool	Radio set	Car	Transistor
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Irular	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Koravar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	2	8	9	...	12	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	...
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	4	31	5	3	11	2	1	4	...	...	3	1	1
Valayan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shanar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nair	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	2	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Chettiar	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Christians	2	3	...	...	2	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Total	**10**	**45**	**14**	**3**	**32**	**2**	**4**	**5**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**1**

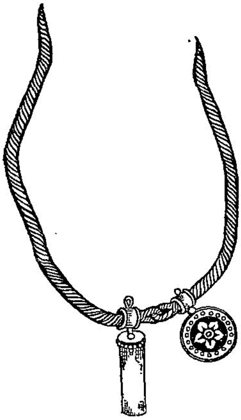
A scrutiny of this table will show that the Okkaligas and that too those mostly belonging to the Lingayat sect are owning many of the costly items of consumer goods. One of them even owns a car which he keeps on the other side of the river, so that he could take it to Mettupalayam whenever he wants. Three Okkaliga houses are seen to be well furnished with chairs, tables and sofa sets. Due to recent introduction of electricity to the village, three have fixed up radio-sets and ceiling fans. To our surprise, one Irula was found to possess a gramaphone set, although he did not have anything worth mentioning by way of furniture or other luxurious items of consumer goods in his house. The households engaged in agriculture own common types of implements needed for doing agricultural operations. Iron-pointed ploughs, sickle, serrated harvesting knife, *Mammootti*, *Kalaikothu* are some of the implements found in all cultivating households. The Koravar households who do basket-making use heavy sickle and small knife for cutting bamboos and for splitting them.



Onnu mani

Residential pattern and housing

25. As already mentioned, the village site of Nellithorai is very much congested. There is no proper lay-out. The lanes spiral round and some end up blindly. The houses touch one another and the space set apart for washing, bathing etc., is either in the back or in the front of the houses. The village-site, or Natham as locally called, is fully occupied by houses and cattle-sheds. In Nellithorai proper, there are 79 houses in an extent of 3.47 acres. Deducting the space occupied by lanes and public places, the average extent of house-site comes to about 2.5 cents. This is barely sufficient for a house-hold. For future expansion of the village, it is necessary that some adjoining dry land is acquired, laid out and assigned to needy families.



Kuchchi Thali of Oddars

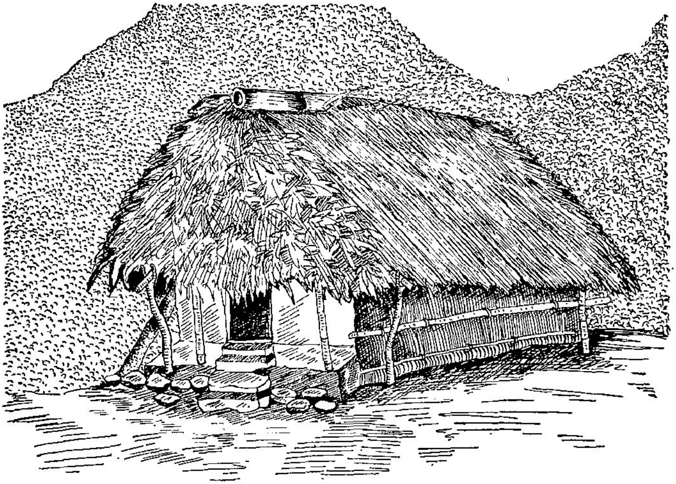
In contrast to the congested housing conditions prevailing in the main village, the conditions are different in the Irular settlements. No Irular Pathi contains more than 10 to 15 houses. The houses are constructed in rows on either side of a common yard which is used for tethering cattle. There is open space all round and the patches of cultivable land permitted to be cultivated by the Forest Department adjoin the dwelling houses.

Non-systematic growth of houses in Nellithorai proper may be ascribed to the following reasons :

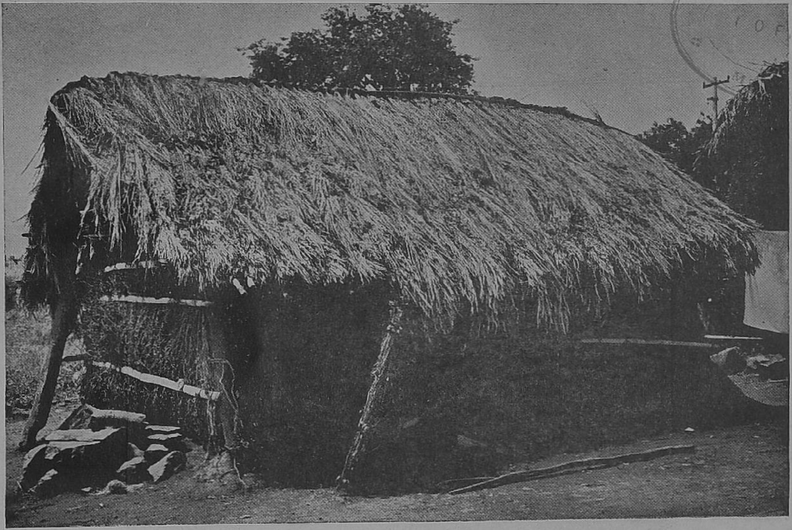
A thatched hut of an Irula

(i) No town planning rules were enforced. In fact no local body or Panchayat existed till recently to enforce any such rule. The villagers built houses at whatever available open space they found convenient in the Natham, and in whatever directions they chose.

(ii) The village officers also did not enforce any lay-out. Encroachment on the village site by constructing huts was never penalised. Assignment of house-sites within the Natham followed only after the defacto construction of houses.



Another thatched hut



Thatched house of an Irula.

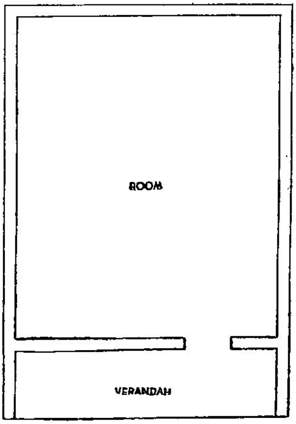
An Irula family living within an arecanut tope.

Front view of the house of a well-to-do Okkaliga.

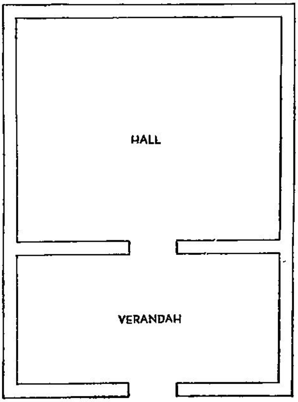
In Nellithorai proper, where Okkaligas and other non-tribals live, the walls are built with random rubble. Some are built with bricks and some with mud. For roofing, mangalore tiles are largely used in this village. Four houses belonging to rich ryots are terraced. The houses occupied by Chakkiliyars and Valayars are mud-walled and of thatched roofings. The material used for roofing is a kind of wild grass called *Kanangu Pillu* or palmyra leaves. The materials required for constructing houses, like mangalore tiles, cement etc., are purchased at Mettupalayam and brought in double bullock-carts.

In contrast to the houses in Nellithorai proper, the huts constructed by Irulars are simple in design and built of materials locally available. For the walls they use bamboo *thattis* and plaster them with mud. For roofing they use Kanangu Pillu, a kind of wild grass available in the forest closeby. They plaster the flooring and the walls with mud and smear them with cow-dung paste. They never white-wash their walls for fear of attracting elephants.

Table No: IV gives the number of households in the various castes by number of rooms and by number of persons occupying the houses. For the village as a whole it is seen that out of 256 houses, 212 are single roomed houses and 14 are without any rooms whatsoever. Fifteen houses are with two rooms, 9 with three rooms and 6 with four rooms. It has to be



Ground plan of a hut of an Irula



Ground plan of a hut

noted here that all the Irular houses are single roomed houses. Out of the 6 houses with four or more rooms, 5 are owned by Okkaligas and one by a Chettiar. The single-roomed houses invariably have a front verandah which they use for living by day and for sleeping during the night. Some even use the front verandah for cooking purpose.

Food habits

26. Although paddy is grown in a large area in the village, the labouring classes and the small land-owners, take both rice and millets as their staple food. From Table No. V, it is seen that out of 256 households, 252 take millets atleast once a day and 244 take rice also.

From this, it could be gathered that only three households are purely rice-eaters, 244 are mixed diet eaters and the rest millet eaters. Although 145 Irular households are shown in this table as taking rice as staple diet along with millets, their consumption of rice will only be occasional. They subsist on

TABLE No. IV

Households by number of rooms and persons

Caste/Tribe	Total number of households	Total number of rooms	Total number of family members	Households with no regular room		Households with one room		Households with two rooms		Households with three rooms		Households with four or more rooms	
				House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members	House-holds	Members
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Irulas	153	143	574	10	40	143	534	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliar	7	7	29	...	...	7	29	...	...	...	...	...	...
Koravar	3	2	9	1	3	2	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	2	4	...	...	...	...	1	4	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	76	210	1	4	34	128	8	37	6	31	2	10
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	34	59	...	...	2	7	4	13	3	13	3	26
Valayan	5	5	17	...	...	5	17	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shanar	2	1	8	1	4	1	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	2	2	11	...	...	2	11	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	2	5	...	...	2	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	1	1	3	...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	1	1	4	...	...	1	4	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	1	1	5	...	...	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	6	6	16	...	...	6	16	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nair	1	1	5	...	...	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	2	3	11	...	...	1	7	1	4	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	5	17	1	5	1	3	...	...	...	...	1	9
Muslims	2	2	9	...	...	2	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christians	1	2	9	...	...	...	...	1	9	...	...	...	...
Total	256	296	1,005	14	56	212	793	15	67	9	44	6	45

TABLE No. V

Diet and Food Habits

Caste/Tribe	Total number of households	Number of vegetarian households	Number of non-vegetarian households	Number of households taking: Rice	Wheat	Grains other than rice or wheat	Roots including tapioca	Frequency of meals: One meal a day	Two meals a day	Three meals and more a day
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Irulas	153	...	153	145	...	153	109	...	107	46
Chakkiliar	7	...	7	7	...	7	...	...	1	6
Koravar	3	...	3	3	...	3	...	...	2	1
Pandaram	1	...	1	1	1	1	...	...	1	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	...	51	49	1	49	...	...	46	5
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	12	...	12	5	11	...	...	11	1
Valayar	5	1	4	4	...	5	...	...	3	2
Shanar	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	1	1
Asari	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	1	1
Vannan	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	...	2
Navithar	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Sembadavan	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...
Oddar	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Konga Vellala	6	...	6	6	...	6	...	...	2	4
Nair	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	1	...
Brahmin	2	2	...	2	...	1	...	...	2	...
Chettiar	3	...	3	3	...	3	...	...	2	1
Muslims	2	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	1	1
Christians	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	1	...
Total	256	15	241	244	7	252	109	...	183	73

whatever they get from out of the crops they grow and from the purchases, they could afford. For nearly six months after harvest, every thing goes well with the Irulars. During the lean months, however, they eke out a hand-to-mouth existence. They then eat whatever they get. They gather wild roots, yams and tubers. They catch birds and kill animals occasionally in the forest. They even eat tamarind seeds which contain plenty of starch. It is during the lean months only, they are inclined to go out in search of work for wages or to gather firewood for sale so that they could purchase grains. Their ability to sustain hunger is remarkable. From three meals a day taken during days immediately after harvest, the number of meals per day may get reduced gradually and finally the food taken by them may not amount to anything worth calling a meal. The Irulars do not have any definite food habits since their diet is conditioned more by the availability of food than by choice. They do not however eat beef or the flesh of buffalo or bison.

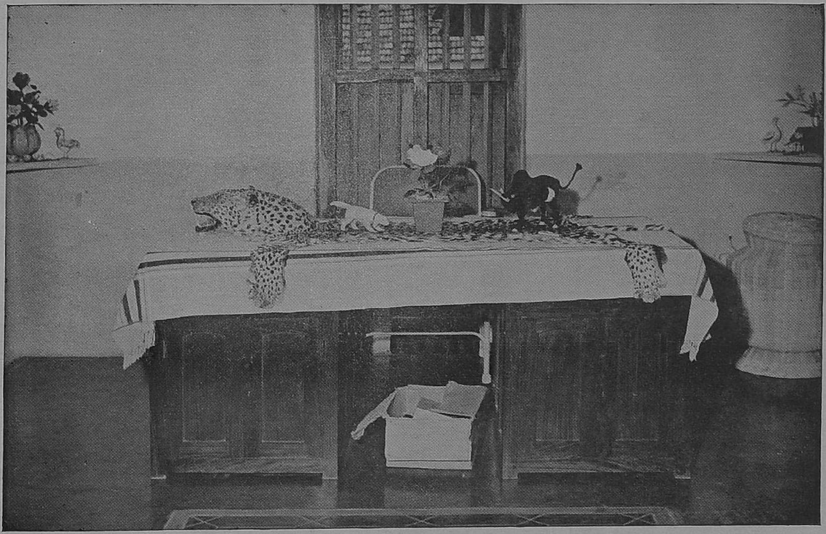
Out of 256 households, 73 are recorded as taking three meals a day and the rest 2 meals a day. The food routine in most of the households is to take a millet gruel in the morning, a cooked meal for lunch and a freshly cooked rice or millet meal accompanied by a sauce for the night. The households which are economically well placed take breakfast in the morning by way of tiffin and coffee, a rice meal at midday and another freshly cooked meal at night. Although they take enough of cereals, it cannot be said that they are taking adequate quantities of other nutritive food for a balanced diet. Out of 103 non-Irular households, 15 are returned as pure vegetarians. The vegetarian houses consist of the 12 Lingayat Okkaliga households, two Brahmin households and one Valaya household. The Valaya household is observing vegetarianism not out of tradition but due to health reasons. In the case of non-vegetarian households, the frequency of taking non-vegetarian food may be once in 2 to 3 months. No one in this village except the Chakkiliars takes beef. The items of non-vegetarian food occasionally taken by them consist of mutton, fish, chicken, eggs and pork.

The use of beverages like tea, and coffee is on the increase and they are taken as a privileged drink by the earning male members from the village tea-shop. The housewives tolerate this small expenditure incurred by their male partners on beverages and on smoke. They in turn are allowed to chew pan and tobacco.

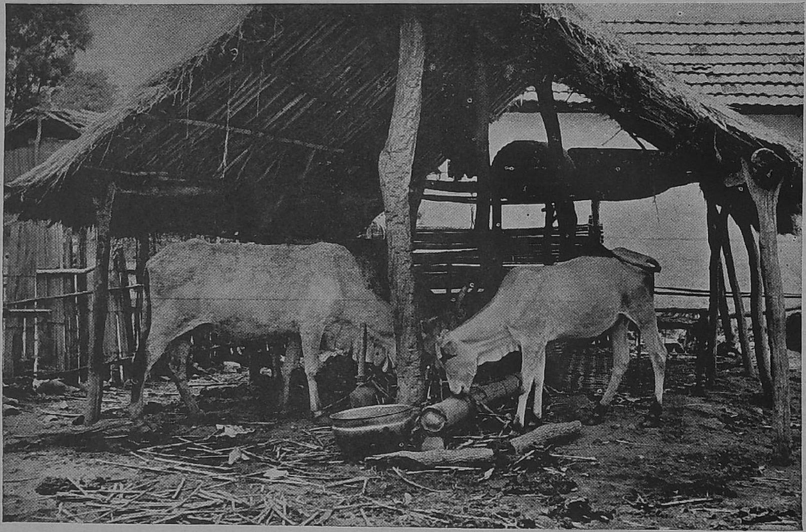
Health and sanitation

27. Being surrounded on three sides by forests and lying in a valley, Nellithorai village was previously highly malarial place. In 1940 it was a common sight to see children with protruding bellies, because of enlarged spleens, caused by frequent attacks of malaria. Many of the well-to-do land-owners of this village choose to live outside the village in Tekkampatti and Mettupalayam. On this plea of malaria, the village-officers, who are everywhere expected to live in the village itself, so that they may know intimately the people and things taking place inside the village, got special permission of the Collector to live in an adjacent village. The highly fertile and arecanut lands were not fetching adequate land values by way of sale because of the apathy of the people to work here. Thanks to the operations carried out by the National Malaria Eradication Programme, the village is now almost free from this scourge. The living conditions of the village have improved considerably. The people including Irulars generally look healthier. Those villagers who were originally natives of this village and living elsewhere are slowly returning to this village and renovating their houses. The village site of Nellithorai proper is getting congested. The land values are increasing. Almost all the people observe a certain amount of personal cleanliness. They take bath daily. There is a bathing-ghat in the river by the side of the village. They take oil bath once in a week. They wash and keep their clothes clean, however old and torn they may be. There are two families of washerman who attend to washing the clothes of the caste people of the village. The people of this village also keep the interior of their houses clean. They smear the floor of the house with cow-dung once in a week.

In contrast to the personal cleanliness and cleanliness of their houses, the people lack a sense of environmental cleanliness. The streets are never swept. Drain water is allowed to stagnate in the streets in cess-pools. Children are allowed to urinate and ease near the houses. Elderly people use the pathways and approach roads for this purpose. For want of privacy, women answer calls of nature only after dusk or before sun-rise. Stray pigs feeding on the night-soil deposited on the pathways and approach-roads make them more filthy. It may appear that the conditions described above are nothing peculiar to this village alone.



Interior of the house of a rich Okkaliga.



A cattle shed.

Household utensils.

TABLE No. VI

Prohibited foods and drinks

Caste/Tribe	Number of households reporting as prohibited from					Number that did not report any food to be prohibited	Number that did not report any drink to be prohibited
	Mutton	Beef	Non-vegetarian food	Beef and Mutton	Drink		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Irulas	...	...	...	...	...	153	153
Chakkiliar	1	...	...	...	...	6	7
Koravar	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Okkaligas (Gudi)	...	3	...	...	...	48	51
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	...	...	12	...	...	...	12
Valayan	...	...	1	...	...	4	5
Shanar	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Vannan	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Sembadavan	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Oddar	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Konga Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	6	6
Nair	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Brahmin	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
Chettiar	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Christians	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Total	1	3	15	1	...	236	256

Drinking water

28. There are a few draw wells in the village. Even in places where wells have been sunk, they do not use this water for drinking purpose. They prefer to drink river water which is more tasty. The use of the river water makes them vulnerable to attacks of cholera and dysentery. There have been very many cases of such epidemics in previous years. But the people are very slow in learning a lesson out of the out-breaks of these epidemics.

Medical aid

29. There is no dispensary in this village. For small ailments, the people have their own local remedies. For child birth, the local barber-woman attends on the expecting mothers. Help of a trained midwife is rarely sought. In the case of serious ailments only, the people reluctantly go to the Government Hospital at Mettupalayam. The conditions of Irulars living in interior settlements are still worse. But their capacity to resist diseases is remarkable. They develop a sort of immunity against malaria.

CHAPTER III

POPULATION

Population increase

30. The population of Nellithorai according to the 1961 Census is 934 and according to the present survey conducted in the middle of 1961 is 1,005. The increase in the population of the village found at the time of our survey over the 1961 count is explained as due to an influx of workers, mostly Irulars for the Kundah Hydro Electric Project. The population of the village in 1951 was 861. The increase of population in the decade 1951–61 comes to 8·4%. This increase should be considered as normal when compared to the taluk increase of 8·5% in the decade.

Sex ratio

31. The sex-ratio of the village in 1951 and 1961 are respectively 973 and 947 females per 1,000 males. The sex-ratio according to our survey works out to 936 females. The low sex-ratio of females recorded in our survey is because of the existence of a floating population of male workers who have come to the village to work in the Hydro Electric Project. The sex-ratio among the Irulars is 973 females per 1,000 males and this could be considered as more balanced.

Age composition

32. The percentage distribution of the population in the broad age-groups for the village and for the district is as follows :

Age group	For the village	For the district
0 – 14	39·3	36·8
15 – 34	31·1	33·7
35 – 59	25·0	23·5
60 & over	*4·6*	6·0

It may be observed that for the village the percentage of children in the age group 0–14 is slightly high. This may be explained as due to improved health conditions arising out of Malaria Eradication Programmes. The slightly increased percentage figure in the age group *35-59* for the village may be because of the recent influx of working class people in the village. The low percentage figure in the age group 60 and over may be due to low longevity of life which arose on account of the past unhealthy conditions in the tract.

Birth and death rates

33. The number of births and deaths recorded in the decade is given below :

Year	Birth	Death
1950	13	9
1951	8	13
1952	10	13
1953	7	...
1954	16	6
1955	13	6
1956	18	7
1957	13	7
1958	8	...
1959	14	7
Total ...	**120**	**68**

The birth rate works out to 13 per 1,000 and death rate to 7 per 1,000. The birth and death rates are low but this may be due to poor registration of births and deaths. As the Irular settlements are in interior forests and as the Village Officers of Nellithorai do not reside in the village, recorded birth and death rates are bound to be low.

Size of a family

34. According to Table No. VII the average size of a family in the village as a whole works out to 3·9. The percentage distribution of households in the various size classes is as follows :

Size of family	Percentage distribution
Single member	2·3
2 – 3 members	41·8
4 – 6 ,,	50·0
7 – 9 ,,	5·1
10 members & above	0·8

TABLE No. VII

Size of Household

Caste/Tribe	No. of house-holds	Single member			2–3 members			4–6 members			7–9 members			10 members & over		
		House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females	House-holds	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
HINDUS																
Irulas	153	2	2	...	72	91	95	72	167	166	7	31	22	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	7	1	...	1	2	2	4	3	8	6	1	5	3	...	...	...
Koravar	3	...	...	...	2	3	2	1	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	1	...	1	19	26	21	29	79	65	1	5	3	1	5	5
,, (Lingayath)	12	...	...	...	2	2	2	9	18	20	...	...	...	1	7	10
Valayan	5	...	...	...	3	3	5	2	3	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shanar	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	1	...	...	...	1	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	6	1	1	...	4	6	4	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nair	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	2	1	3	4	...	...	...
Chettiar	3	...	...	...	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	5	4	...	...	...
Muslims	2	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	1	5	2	...	...	...
Christians	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	6	3	...	...	...
Total	256	6	3	3	107	138	136	128	306	291	13	60	41	2	12	15

It is seen that 27% of the total population constituting 41·8% of the total number of households come under the category 2–3 members and 60% of the population constituting 50% of the households come under the category 4–6 members. If we consider the size of the family community-wise, it could be seen that the average size of an Irular family is 3·4 and that of the Okkaligas 4·3. The size of an Irular family is below the average because among Irulars as soon as a son gets married he is asked to live separately with his wife in a new house constructed in the village. The number of children born to an Irular couple also rarely exceeds three. Their birth rate is low. This accounts for the smallness of the size of an Irular family.

Marital status

35. The percentage distribution of the population in the various marital status categories in the village and in the district is as follows:

	Percentage distribution in the village	Percentage distribution in the district
Never married	46·1	50·1
Married	47·6	41·8
Widowed	6·1	7·2
Divorced or Separated	0·2	0·9

TABLE No. VIII

Marital Status by Communities

Caste/Tribe	Total population			Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Irulas	574	291	283	135	118	147	147	9	17	...	1
Chakkiliyar	29	15	14	9	6	6	7	...	1	...	...
Koravar	9	6	3	3	...	2	2	...	1	1	...
Pandaram	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	210	115	95	66	35	46	43	3	17	...	...
„ (Lingayath)	59	27	32	15	12	11	12	1	8	...	...
Valayan	17	6	11	2	4	4	5	...	1	...	1
Shanar	8	5	3	3	1	2	2	...	...	...	...
Asari	11	5	6	3	4	2	2	...	...	...	...
Vannan	5	2	3	1	1	1	1	...	1	...	...
Navithar	3	2	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Sembadavan	4	1	3	...	1	1	2	...	...	...	...
Oddar	5	3	2	2	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	16	10	6	5	2	4	4	1	...	...	...
Nair	5	3	2	2	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	11	5	6	4	4	1	2	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	17	9	8	4	4	4	4	1	...	...	...
Muslims	9	6	3	4	1	2	2	...	...	...	...
Christians	9	6	3	5	2	1	1	...	...	...	...
Total	1,005	519	486	266	198	237	239	15	47	1	2

TABLE No. IX

Age and Marital Status

Age group	Total population			Never married		Married		Widowed		Divorced or Separated	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
All ages	1,005	519	486	266	198	237	239	15	47	1	2
0 — 4	174	97	77	97	77	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 — 9	129	59	70	59	70	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 — 14	92	56	36	56	36	...	...	...	...	...	...
15 — 19	61	36	25	34	11	2	14	...	...	...	...
20 — 24	66	24	42	17	3	7	39	...	...	...	...
25 — 29	105	46	59	1	1	43	57	2	1	...	...
30 — 34	81	39	42	2	...	37	41	...	1	...	...
35 — 44	159	94	65	...	...	89	55	5	8	...	2
45 — 59	92	49	43	...	...	44	26	4	17	1	...
60 & over	46	19	27	...	...	15	7	4	20	...	...

The percentage of never married persons in the village is below the district level and that of the married far above the district level. This would indicate prevalence of early marriages in the various communities belonging to the village. The percentages in the 'widowed' and 'separated' categories for the village is low because most of the communities in the village allow divorces and widow marriages. The percentage distribution among the marital status categories in some of the important communities in the village is as follows:

Community	Never married	Married	Widowed	Divorced or Separated
Irulas	44·1	51·2	4·5	0·2
Gudi Okkaligas	48·1	42·4	9·5	...
Lingayath Okkaligas	45·7	39·0	15·3	...
Chakkiliyars	51·7	44·8	3·5	...

Considering only the category of never married it is seen that the percentage is high for the Chakkiliyars and Gudi Okkaligas and that it is not so high for the Irulars and the Lingayath Okkaligas.

Language

36. Although everyone in this village knows Tamil, the mother-tongue spoken by the people of different castes is different. The Irulars speak a corrupt form of Tamil, the Okkaligas speak a debased Canarese and the Chakkiliyars a slang of Telugu. Some of the newly come workers from other places speak Malayalam. The distribution of population based on mother tongue is as follows:

Tamil	...	683
Canarese	...	273
Telugu	...	31
Malayalam	...	18

Literacy and Education

37. The percentage of literacy in the village is low. As against a percentage of 29·4 for Coimbatore district and 30·2 for the State, our survey shows that this village has only a literacy level of 16·7%. The percentage of literacy in the village in 1951 was 5·9. So in comparison to 1951 figures, it may be said that the village has made a large stride in literacy. But in comparison to the other areas in the district, the village should be deemed as lacking far behind (Table No. X).

TABLE No. X

Education

Caste/Tribe	Total population			Illiterate		Literate without educational standard		Primary or Junior Basic		Matric or S.S.L.C.		Intermediate or P.U.C.	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
HINDUS													
Irulas	574	291	283	262	281	23	2	5	...	1	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	29	15	14	13	14	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Koravar	9	6	3	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	4	2	2	1	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	210	115	95	72	87	31	8	12	...	...	...	...	...
,, (Lingayath)	59	27	32	5	15	8	12	12	5	1	...	1	...
Valayan	17	6	11	6	10	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shanar	8	5	3	4	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	11	5	6	1	6	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	5	2	3	1	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	3	2	1	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	4	1	3	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	5	3	2	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	16	10	6	7	6	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Nair	5	3	2	...	1	1	1	1	...	1	...	...	...
Brahmin	11	5	6	3	4	...	2	1	...	...	...	1	...
Chettiar	17	9	8	3	4	4	3	2	1	...	...	...	...
Muslims	9	6	3	...	2	3	1	3	...	...	...	...	...
Christians	9	6	3	1	1	2	...	2	1	1	1	...	...
Total	**1,005**	**519**	**486**	**390**	**447**	**79**	**31**	**43**	**7**	**5**	**1**	**2**	...

The low percentage of literacy in the village is attributable directly to the Irulars and other backward communities residing in the village. The community-wise percentage of literacy is as follows :

Irulas	...	5·4
Gudi Okkaligas	...	23·8
Lingayath Okkaligas	...	66·1
Chakkiliyars	...	6·9
Valayars	...	5·9
Kongu Vellalas	...	18·7
Brahmins	...	36·4

The above statement shows that except for the Lingayath Okkaligas and the Brahmins, the other communities are very much backward in this respect. As regards Irulars, their low literacy may be attributed to lack of schools in the proximity of their settlements. But there are Tribal Welfare Residential Schools at Coonoor and Chinna Thadagam where boarding and lodging are free for the tribal boys. If only the Irulars value education more, they have ample opportunities of educating their children. But they are very reluctant to send their children to those far off Residential Schools. The following may be cited as reasons for the low standard of literacy in the village.

1. The existing single teacher school in this village is of a recent origin.

2. Due to general poverty prevailing in the village, the parents value more, the small wages earned by their children in sundry items of work like grazing cattle, collecting fuel etc., rather than in the acquisition of school knowledge.

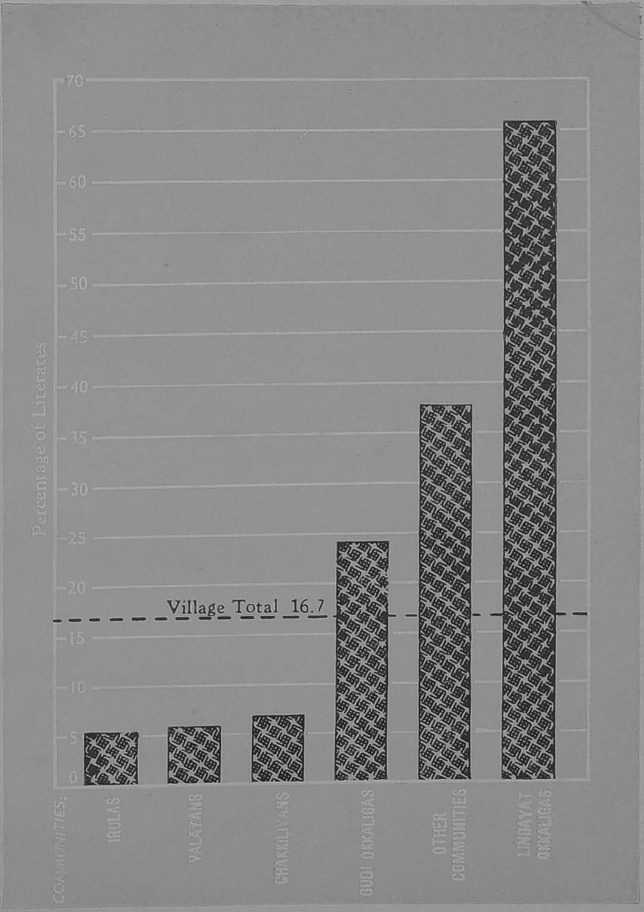
3. The school teachers posted to this village do not stick to the place.

TABLE No. XI

Literacy by age group

Age group	Total population			Illiterate		Literate without educational standard		Primary or Basic		Matric or Higher Secondary		Intermediate or P.U.C.	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
All ages	1,005	519	486	390	447	79	31	43	7	5	1	2	..
0 — 4	174	97	77	97	77	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 — 9	129	59	70	39	57	19	13	1	...	...	...	...	...
10 — 14	92	56	36	33	28	10	6	13	2	...	...	...	...
15 — 19	61	36	25	23	23	4	1	7	1	1	...	1	...
20 — 24	66	24	42	18	38	1	2	5	2	...	...	...	...
25 — 29	105	46	59	36	57	6	1	3	1	1	...	...	...
30 — 34	81	39	42	29	41	7	1	2	...	1	...	...	...
35 — 44	159	94	65	69	58	17	5	6	1	1	1	1	...
45 — 59	92	49	43	29	42	13	1	6	...	1	...	...	...
60 & over	46	19	27	17	26	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...

LITERACY LEVELS



If we consider the percentage of literacy among males and females separately, it can be seen that literates among males come to 24·9% and those among females 8·0%. The disparity between literate males and literate females is getting reduced in the present generation as could be seen from the following figures.

Age group	Literate males	Literate females
5 - 14	43	21
15 & above	86	18

The village at present is served by a single teacher Elementary School. It was established by the Coimbatore District Board in 1956. Subsequently, it was transferred to the Karamadai Panchayat Union. Children are taught upto the fifth class in the school. For higher education they have to go to Mettupalayam. Out of a total of 220 children of school going age in the village, only 48 children attend the school. The coverage is low. A higher coverage can be attained only, if Irular boys are enlisted in the Tribal Welfare Residential Schools.

Working force

38. Table No. XII gives the workers and non-workers by age groups and Table No. XIII gives the workers and non-workers by communities.

The village has a working force of 54·5% of the population. This is higher than the corresponding percentage of workers in the rural areas of Coimbatore district which is 52·3%. Generally in areas dependent on agrarian economy, the percentage of workers to the total population tends to be high. Among the males, 61·5% of their population are workers. This is lower than the district figure of 65·0%. But among the females, the percentage of workers to their population is 47% as against 29·3% for the rural areas of the district. The high percentage of workers among the female population shows females are compelled to work for a subsistence living. The

TABLE No. XII

Workers and Non-workers by sex and age groups

Age group	Total population			Workers			Non-workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
All ages	1,005	519	486	548	319	229	457	200	257
0 — 4	174	97	77	...	...	...	174	97	77
5 — 9	129	59	70	5	2	3	124	57	67
10 — 14	92	56	36	40	24	16	52	32	20
15 — 19	61	36	25	46	27	19	15	9	6
20 — 24	66	24	42	53	23	30	13	1	12
25 — 29	105	46	59	88	46	42	17	...	17
30 — 34	81	39	42	73	39	34	8	...	8
35 — 44	159	94	65	141	94	47	18	...	18
45 — 59	92	49	43	77	49	28	15	...	15
60 & over	46	19	27	25	15	10	21	4	17

TABLE No. XIII

Workers and Non-workers by sex and communities

Caste/Tribe	Total population			Workers			Non-workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Irulas	574	291	283	348	196	152	226	95	131
Chakkiliyar	29	15	14	14	8	6	15	7	8
Koravar	9	6	3	8	5	3	1	1	...
Pandaram	4	2	2	1	1	...	3	1	2
Okkaligas (Gudi)	210	115	95	106	62	44	104	53	51
,, (Lingayath)	59	27	32	19	15	4	40	12	28
Valayan	17	6	11	13	6	7	4	...	4
Shanar	8	5	3	4	2	2	4	3	1
Asari	11	5	6	4	3	1	7	2	5
Vannan	5	2	3	3	1	2	2	1	1
Navithar	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	...
Sembadavan	4	1	3	2	1	1	2	...	2
Oddar	5	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	...
Konga Vellala	16	10	6	9	6	3	7	4	3
Nair	5	3	2	1	1	...	4	2	2
Brahmin	11	5	6	1	1	...	10	4	6
Chettiar	17	9	8	7	6	1	10	3	7
Muslims	9	6	3	2	2	...	7	4	3
Christians	9	6	3	1	1	...	8	5	3
Total	1,005	519	486	548	319	229	457	200	257

percentage of workers in the population of children in the age group of 0–4 is 11·4. This is low when compared to the district rural figure of 13·5%. Actually the percentage of workers in the several broad age-groups in the village and in the rural areas of Coimbatore district are given below:

Age-groups	Percentage of workers in Nellithorai Village	Percentage of workers in Coimbatore rural
0 – 14	11·4	13·5
15 – 34	83·1	74·4
35 – 59	86·8	79·7
60 & over	54·3	53·6

This shows that the percentage of workers to the population is high in the village in all age groups except 0–14. The percentage of workers among males and females in the various communities is given below:

	Community	Persons	Males	Females
1.	Irulas	60·63	67·35	53·71
2.	Chakkiliyar	48·28	53·33	42·86
3.	Koravar	88·89	83·33	100·00
4.	Pandaram	25·00	50·00	...
5.	Gudi Okkaligas	50·48	53·91	46·32
6.	Lingayath Okkaligas	32·20	55·56	12·50
7.	Valayan	76·47	100·00	63·64
8.	Shanar	50·00	40·00	66·67
9.	Asari	36·36	60·00	16·67
10.	Vannan	60·00	50·00	66·67
11.	Navithan	66·61	50·00	100·00
12.	Sembadavan	50·00	100·00	33·33
13.	Oddar	60·00	33·33	100·00
14.	Kongu Vellala	56·25	60·00	50·00
15.	Nair	20·00	33·33	...
16.	Brahmin	9·09	20·00	...
17.	Chettiar	41·18	66·67	12·50
18.	Muslims	22·22	33·33	...
19.	Christians	11·11	16·67	...
	Total ...	**54·53**	**61·46**	**47·35**

TABLE No. XIV

Non-workers by sex, age groups and nature of activity

Age group	Non-workers: Total Non-workers			Full time students or children attending school		Persons engaged only in household duties		Dependants, infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disabled		Other dependants		Unemployed persons	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
All ages	457	200	257	46	21	...	61	150	175	4	...	...	...
0 — 4	174	97	77	...	...	...	...	97	77	...	...	...	...
5 — 9	124	57	67	19	12	...	...	38	55	...	...	...	...
10 — 14	52	32	20	21	8	...	1	11	11	...	...	...	...
15 — 19	15	9	6	6	1	...	3	...	2	3	...	...	...
20 — 24	13	1	12	...	...	...	10	...	2	1	...	...	...
25 — 29	17	...	17	...	...	...	17	...	...	...	...	...	...
30 — 34	8	...	8	...	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
35 — 44	18	...	18	...	...	...	15	...	3	...	...	...	...
45 — 59	15	...	15	...	...	...	2	...	13	...	...	...	...
60 & over	21	4	17	...	...	...	5	4	12	...	...	...	...

From this it could be seen that the percentage of workers is high in the communities of Koravars, Valayars, Navithan, Vannan, Oddan and Irulars. It is low among Pandarams, Lingayath Okkaligas, Nair, Brahmin, Muslims and Christians. In all these communities, the percentage is low because the female participation in the village working force is not adequate.

Non-workers

39. Table No. XIV gives the activities of the non-workers by sex and by broad age-groups. Table No. XV gives the activities of the non-workers by sex and community. The latter table shows that the percentage of students to the total non-workers is high among Okkaligas, Asari, Navithan and Nair. The percentage in other castes is low because of the failure of these communities to send their children to schools.

TABLE No. XV

Non-workers by sex, community and nature of activity

Caste/Tribe	Total Non-workers			Full time students or children attending school		Persons engaged only in household duties		Dependants, infants and children not attending school and persons permanently disabled		Other dependants		Unemployed persons	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Irulas	226	95	131	6	2	...	25	89	104	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliyar	15	7	8	1	...	...	2	6	6	...	...	...	...
Koravar	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	3	1	2	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	104	53	51	21	5	...	12	32	34	...	...	...	...
,, (Lingayath)	40	12	28	6	6	...	9	6	13	...	...	...	...
Valayan	4	...	4	...	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...
Shanar	4	3	1	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	...	...	...
Asari	7	2	5	2	...	...	1	...	4	...	...	...	...
Vannan	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Navithar	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	2	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Oddar	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	7	4	3	1	...	...	1	3	2	...	...	...	...
Nair	4	2	2	1	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Brahmin	10	4	6	1	2	...	1	3	3	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	10	3	7	1	3	...	3	2	1	...	...	...	...
Muslims	7	4	3	1	1	...	2	...	...	3	...	...	...
Christians	8	5	3	4	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
Total	**457**	**200**	**257**	**46**	**21**	...	**61**	**150**	**175**	**4**	...	...	...

CHAPTER IV

VILLAGE ECONOMY

Occupational distribution

40. Like most other villages in India, the economy of Nellithorai centres round agriculture. Out of 256 households, 110 pursue cultivation either independently or with some other occupation. Twenty-five households are engaged as agricultural labourers either independently or with some other occupation. Households engaged as plantation labourers come to 66. Three households are engaged in cattle rearing and one in fishing. So on the whole 205 out of 256 households are engaged in the primary sector. This comes to 80% which is rather high. Six households are engaged in cottage industry and the remaining 47 households are engaged in tertiary occupations.

Workers

41. If we take a worker as a unit, 374 workers out of 548 are engaged in the primary sector. This works out to 68·1%. The percentage of workers engaged in secondary occupation is 1·5 and that for the workers engaged in tertiary occupations 30·4. Table No. XVI gives the occupational classification of households by communities. It could be seen from it that the communities primarily engaged in cultivation are the Irulars and the Okkaligas. The Irulars are also engaged in plantation labour. The arecanut topes in the village are for this purpose treated as plantations and the Irulars working in them are treated as plantation labourers. The only community which is engaged in cottage industry of basket making is the Koravars. Those engaged in business are the three households of Chettiars and one household of Okkaligas. The Sembadavan pursues his traditional occupation of fishing, the Asari pursues his traditional occupation of carpentry and the Vannan and Navithan pursue their traditional occupations of washing clothes and shaving respectively. The other castes pursue occupations of miscellaneous nature.

From Table No. XIX, it is seen that women are engaged mostly in cultivation, plantation labour, agricultural labour and 'general cooly' which means unskilled labour.

Children are found to be predominantly engaged in unskilled labour like 'general cooly' and plantation labour. From Table No. XX it is seen that out of 164 workers engaged in cultivation of own and leased out lands, 103 belong to Irulars and 55 to Okkaligas. The other few workers engaged in cultivation belong to Chakkiliars, Valayan, Shanan and Chettiar.

Agriculture

42. The classification of the lands available in this village is as follows:

Assessed lands (Dry)	805·70	Acres
,, (Wet)	698·37	,,
Inam lands (Dry)	3·22	,,
,, (Wet)	25·27	,,
Poramboke lands for communal purposes)	319·69	,,
Reserved Forest	593·73	,,
Unassessed waste lands	48·85	,,
Total ...	2,494·83	,,

This shows that adequate lands have been set apart for communal purposes and for pasture.

The extent of cultivable private lands comes to 1,532·56 acres. Out of this, the extent cultivated in the previous six years are as follows:

1955 – 56	1,369·22	Acres
1956 – 57	1,377·22	,,
1957 – 58	1,333·60	,,
1958 – 59	1,360·60	,,
1959 – 60	1,364·22	,,
1960 – 61	1,341·61	,,

It could be seen that about 200 acres are left fallow every year. This consists of both 'current fallows' and 'mamool fallow lands'. The current fallow lands are those which are left uncultivated in any one year. Some dry lands are left fallow at periodical intervals in order to allow soil to regain its lost fertility by natural process. They also include lands which are purposely left fallow either for want of sufficient rain or for want of sufficient resources on the part of the owner. The mamool fallow

TABLE No. XVI

Occupational classification of households

Caste/Tribe	Total No. of households.	Cultivation only.	Cultivation and Agricultural labourer.	Cultivation and cooly.	Cultivation and business.	Cultivation, cooly and others	Agricultural labourer only.	Agricultural labourer and others.	Plantation labourers only.	Plantation labourers and others.	Business only.	Cottage Industry only.	Cottage Industry and cooly.	Cooly only.	Cooly and others.	Others.	Dependants.	Details of other occupations. (Number of households)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
Irulas	153	20	...	51	...	1	...	...	65	1	...	...	...	14	...	...	1	Shepherd 2
Chakkiliar	7	1	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	
Koravar	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	Basket making 3
Pandaram	1	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	1	...	Forest Guard 1
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	21	3	2	...	...	14	...	...	...	1	...	1	8	1	...	...	Rice cake selling 1 Tailor 1 Shepherd 1
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	7	...	...	...	...	1	..	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	2	...	Merchant 1 Station Master 1 Railway Gangman 1 Cook 1
Valayan	5	...	1	.	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	
Shanar	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	
Asari	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	Carpenter 2
Vannan	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	2	...	Dhoby 2
Navithar	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	Barber 1
Sembadavan	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	Fisherman 1
Oddar	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	
Konga Vellala	6	...	..	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	Gangman 1 Channel watchman 1
Nair	1	...	...	...	...	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	Gangman 1
Brahmin	2	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	1	1	Asst. Station Master 1
Chettiar	3	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	..	...	...	...	...	...	Merchant 2
Muslims	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	Mason 1
Christians	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	Station Master 1
Total	256	51	4	53	1	1	24	1	65	1	3	5	1	29	2	13	2	

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

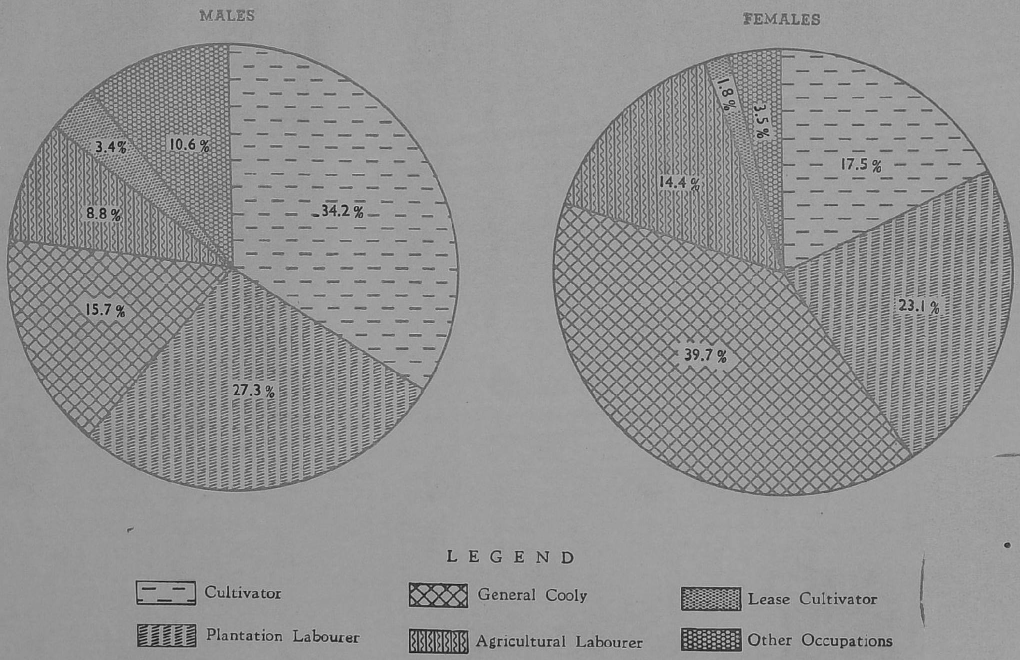


TABLE No. XVII

Workers classified by sex, age group, industry, business and cultivation.

Age group	Total workers			Workers engaged in: Household industry		Household business		Household cultivation		Others	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
All ages	548	319	229	9	3	6	1	120	44	184	181
0 - 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 - 9	5	2	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
10 - 14	40	24	16	1	...	...	...	3	2	20	14
15 - 19	46	27	19	1	1	...	...	2	...	24	18
20 - 24	53	23	30	2	...	3	...	7	5	11	25
25 - 29	88	46	42	...	...	1	...	18	8	27	34
30 - 34	73	39	34	...	1	...	...	15	8	24	25
35 - 44	141	94	47	1	...	1	...	41	12	51	35
45 - 59	77	49	28	4	...	1	1	26	8	18	19
60 & over	25	15	10	...	1	...	...	8	1	7	8

TABLE No. XVIII

Workers classified by sex, industry, business, cultivation and communities

Caste/Tribe	Total workers			Workers engaged in: Household industry		Household business		Household cultivation		Others	
	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Irulas	348	196	152	...	...	...	...	74	29	122	123
Chakkiliar	14	8	6	...	...	...	...	...	1	8	5
Koravar	8	5	3	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	106	62	44	1	...	...	1	33	11	28	32
,, (Lingayath)	19	15	4	..	...	2	...	8	3	5	1
Valayan	13	6	7	...	...	...	...	2	...	4	7
Shanar	4	2	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
Asari	4	3	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Vannan	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Navithar	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Sembadavan	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Oddar	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Konga Vellala	9	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	3
Nair	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Brahmin	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Chettiar	7	6	1	...	...	4	...	2	...	...	1
Muslims	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
Christians	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Total	**548**	**319**	**229**	**9**	**3**	**6**	**1**	**120**	**44**	**184**	**181**

TABLE No. XIX

Workers classified by sex, age group and occupation

Age group	Cultivation			Plantation labourer			Cooly			Agricultural labourer			Lease cultivation		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
All ages	149	109	40	140	87	53	141	50	91	61	28	33	15	11	4
0 - 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 - 9	...	...	...	1	...	1	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 - 14	5	3	2	12	7	5	14	8	6	6	4	2	...	...	...
15 - 19	2	2	...	14	11	3	21	9	12	6	3	3	...	...	...
20 - 24	11	7	4	11	4	7	16	4	12	6	1	5	1	...	1
25 - 29	23	17	6	19	11	8	26	7	19	11	5	6	3	1	2
30 - 34	21	14	7	21	15	6	17	3	14	7	2	5	2	1	1
35 - 44	46	34	12	38	25	13	28	13	15	16	10	6	7	7	...
45 - 59	33	25	8	14	9	5	15	5	10	6	2	4	1	1	...
60 & over	8	7	1	10	5	5	1	...	1	3	1	2	1	1	...

Age group	Basket making			Shepherd			Merchant			Gangman			Carpenter		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
All ages	8	5		6	4	2	5	5	...	3	3	...	3	3	...
0 - 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 - 9	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 - 14	1	1	...	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15 - 19	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20 - 24	1	1	...	1	1	...	2	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
25 - 29	...	...	...	2	1	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
30 - 34	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
35 - 44	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...
45 - 59	2	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
60 & over	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Table No. XIX (Contd.)

Age group	Station Master			Dhoby			Fisher-man			Forest guard			Barber		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
All ages	3	3	...	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	...	1	1	...
0 – 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 – 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 – 14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15 – 19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20 – 24	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
25 – 29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
30 – 34	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
35 – 44	1	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
45 – 59	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
60 & over	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Age group	Watchman			Mason			Assistant to merchant			President of Panchayat Board			Cook		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
All ages	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...
0 – 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 – 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 – 14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15 – 19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
20 – 24	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25 – 29	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
30 – 34	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
35 – 44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
45 – 59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
60 & over	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Age group	Rice cake selling			Lorry cleaner			Tailor			Total		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
All ages	1	...	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	548	319	229
0 – 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 – 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	2	3
10 – 14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40	24	16
15 – 19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	46	27	19
20 – 24	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	53	23	30
25 – 29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	88	46	42
30 – 34	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	73	39	34
35 – 44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	141	94	47
45 – 59	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	77	49	28
60 & over	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25	15	10

TABLE

Workers classified by sex,

Community	Cultivation			Plantation labourer			Cooly			Agricultural labourer			Lease cultivation		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Irulas	103	74	29	140	87	53	103	34	69	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliar	1	...	1	...	...	...	6	3	3	7	5	2	...	...	...
Koravar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	32	24	8	...	...	...	22	9	13	35	16	19	12	9	3
„ (Lingayath)	8	6	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	1	3	2	1
Valayan	2	2	...	...	...	...	2	1	1	9	3	6	...	...	...
Shanar	1	1	...	...	...	...	3	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vannan	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1	2	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	4	2	2	...	...	...
Nair	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...
Muslims	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Christians	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	149	109	40	140	87	53	141	50	91	61	28	33	15	11	4

No. XX

community and occupation

Basket making			Shepherd			Merchant			Gangman			Carpenter			Station Master		
P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)	(32)	(33)	(34)
...	...	...	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
8	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	2	1	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
8	5	3	6	4	2	5	5	...	3	3	...	3	3	...	3	3	...

• Table No.

Community	Dhoby			Fisherman			Forest Guard			Barber			Watchman			Mason		
	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
	(35)	(36)	(37)	(38)	(39)	(40)	(41)	(42)	(43)	(44)	(45)	(46)	(47)	(48)	(49)	(50)	(51)	(52)
Irulas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Koravar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas(Lingayath)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Valayan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shanar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...						
Vannan	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	...	...	...	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oddar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Nair	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chettiar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Muslim	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...
Christian	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...

XX (Contd.)

Assistant to the merchant			President of Local Panchayat			Cook			Rice cake selling			Lorry cleaner			Tailor		
P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
(53)	(54)	(55)	(56)	(57)	(58)	(59)	(60)	(61)	(62)	(63)	(64)	(65)	(66)	(67)	(68)	(69)	(70)
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	1	1	1	...	1	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	1	1	1	...	1	1	...

lands are those which are used for thrashing floor, farmsheds, pathways etc., within the fields. From experience it is found that it is not possible to reduce altogether the gap between the extents of total cultivable private lands and the total cultivated area. The maximum extent cultivated in any one year was in 1956-57 when an extent of 1,377·22 acres was cropped. The cultivable lands in this village can be classed as follows depending upon the nature of crops raised in them.

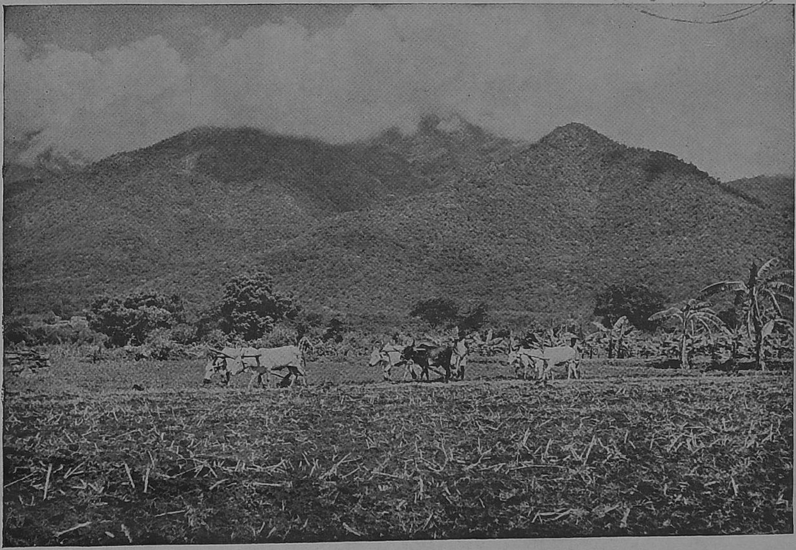
1. Tope lands in which arecanut is raised. These are irrigated by the river channel.
2. Paddy lands in which paddy is raised. These also are irrigated by the river channel.
3. Garden lands which are benefited by lift irrigation from wells. Dry irrigated crops only are raised in these.
4. 'Manavari' lands which are dependent entirely upon rain.

The cropping patterns of these four kinds of lands are different from one another. They shall be dealt with below.

Arecanut cultivation

43. An extent of about 412 acres in this village is covered by arecanut crop. These tope lands lie in the upper reaches of the canal and close to the Reserved Forest. The rainfall, the climate and the soil are conducive to the cultivation of this plantation crop and the yield in this area is considered to be high. In one acre of land, about 800 trees are planted. The spacing from tree to tree was formerly 6 feet, but recent plantings are made with a spacing of 8 feet. The trees begin to give yield after 5 to 6 years. There are two ways of harvesting the crop; one is to harvest the crop when the nuts are green and not fully ripened. Another way is to cut them when they are fully ripe and yellow in colour. The green nuts can be cured and converted into what are called *Kalipakku*. This variety of preparation is used mostly in South India for chewing purposes. The ripened variety on the other hand requires no curing. They have only to be shelled and sent to North Indian markets where they are in great demand. So most of the arecanut growers allow the nuts to ripen and then harvest them. But this makes another difference. If the nuts are to be harvested green, two harvests are possible in a year. If on the other hand ripened nuts only are to be harvested, only one harvest is possible. The harvesting season for the green nuts is June - July in the first instance and January-February in the second instance. The harvesting period for the ripened nuts is September - December. Normally one bunch in a tree may contain about 300 nuts. In the case of harvest of green nuts, the yield per acre is about 50 bags of unshelled nuts. In the case of harvest of yellow ripened nuts, the yield per acre is about 60 bags of unshelled nuts. Sixty bags of unshelled nuts may yield about 12 bags of hard nuts, each bag weighing 1½ Cwts. The cost of one bag of shelled nuts varies from Rs. 320 to Rs. 450 depending upon the quality. The cultivation of arecanut involves an expenditure of about Rs. 1,000 per acre per annum. Every year weeding has to be done four or five times, but once in a year the ground has to be pricked with a weeding hoe and levelled. This is done in the month of April - May. Manuring is done once a year. For this, they make a small furrow round each tree and apply chemical manures, compost manure, bone - meal etc., and then repack the furrows. The marketing of the nuts is done mostly through the Mettupalayam Co-operative Marketing and Sales Society which has opened a branch in New Delhi. The present value of an arecanut tope varies from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 per acre. Even the lease amount varies from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 4,000 per annum. Arecanut cultivation is a very profitable one especially after the nuts found a ready market in North India. In fact all the arecanut growers have now switched over to the production of ripened nuts instead of the old Kalipakku which required a lot of processing to make them fit for chewing.

Harvesting of arecanuts is an interesting operation. The persons engaged in climbing the trees mostly belong to Shanars who come from Mettupalayam. For cutting the bunch, one need not climb up to the top of the tree. It is dangerous also to reach the top as the stem may give way and snap. So the person engaged in harvesting climbs only three-fourth of the tree and plucks the bunch with a bamboo in which a hooked knife is attached. After cutting the bunches in one tree, he pulls the trunk of the adjoining tree with the aid of the bamboo hook and when that tree comes near to him, he just leaps over to the other. This saves him the trouble of climbing down and climbing up for each tree. The jumping from tree to tree



Garden cultivation.

The only shop in Nellithorai selling provisions.

is rather a risky operation, but by practice, the persons occupied in it get used to it. He gets wages in kind. For each bunch of nuts cut by him, he gets 5 nuts as wages. One man engaged in harvesting may complete the operation in half an acre each day.

Paddy cultivation

44. The extent under paddy cultivation in this village is about 400 acres. In some years it is a little less and in some years it is a little more depending upon the availability of water in the irrigation channel which takes off from the Coonoor river. The lands commanded by this channel are divided into two reaches. The upper reach which forms the bulk of the wet lands is called the 'Ayan reach'. The lands irrigated from the tail end of the channel are called the 'Kar reach'. In the Ayan reach, long term Samba variety of paddy is cultivated. In this reach the seed bed is raised in June, transplantation done in July and August and harvest in the end of January or early in February. In the Kar reach, water is available only in the months of February to May. So a short term variety is raised in these lands during those months. The yield per acre of short term crop will be less than that of a long term variety. The wet lands in this village are made fertile on account of continuous depositing of silt carried by the muddy waters of the Coonoor river which also flushes the gutters of the town of Coonoor. The average yield of an acre in the Ayan reach is said to be about nine 'pothies' (about 4,400 lbs.). The average yield in the Kar reach is about six 'pothies' (2,930 lbs.). The ryots in this village do not apply chemical fertilizers to these lands. They say that the Coonoor river which has its catchment area among the potato-fields and tea plantations on the slopes of the Nilgiris brings with it all the manures and the alluvial soil from those rich fields.

Garden lands

45. There are 14 irrigation wells in use in this village. They command irrigation of about 40 acres. Eight of these are fitted with electric pump sets. Five are fitted with oil engine pump sets. In only one well baling is done by the traditional method of using bullocks. The number of irrigation wells in this village is not appreciable because the bulk of the lands are covered by channel irrigation. In the garden lands, meaning the lands benefited by the wells, intensive cultivation is resorted to. There is some cultivation or other all throughout the year. Two millet crops and one cash crop, which may be either tobacco, cotton or chillies are raised by rotation within a period of twelve months. Farm yard manure is applied intensively to these lands and their fertility kept up. So the value of an acre of garden land is usually quoted more than that of an acre of single crop paddy land. If there is sufficient water in the well, the cost of cultivation for a year can be met entirely from the two millet crops and the stalks of cholam and ragi, got as bye-products are sufficient to last for a year as fodder for cattle. So the proceeds of the cash crop are a net gain to the farmers.

Manavari or rain fed lands

46. Roughly about 400 acres come under this category. The sowing in these lands is done in July-August immediately after the first rains. Weeding is done once either in August or in September. Groundnut is harvested in November. Dry millets are harvested in December. Pulses which are sown in rows as mixed crop along with millets or groundnuts are harvested in January–February. This village being on the foot of the hills receives roughly about 40″ of rain fall and a successful dry crop is usually assured. Formerly these lands were all under foodcrops. Now because of the increased prices for groundnuts, more and more extents are being cultivated with this cash crop. From 19·50 acres in 1955–56, it has shot up to 138·54 in 1960–61. This is in accordance with the general trend in Coimbatore district. In Nellithorai, the ryots are not so much worried about the rains but only about the safety of the crops. The proximity of the lands to the forests make them vulnerable to the wild beasts which are always ready to make a feast of the crops. Even paddy when in ears get trampled by herds of elephants. The ryots have to guard the crops day and night against such devastations. It is in this role, the Irulars are proving useful to the cultivators. They can scare even elephants and wild boars. The ryots have been freely given licences to possess guns.

Livestock

47. The village abounds in pasture. The Forest Department permit grazing in the forest of all cattle except goats. The availability of pasture accounts for the large number of cattle found in the village.

TABLE No. XXI

Livestock

Caste/Tribe	Milch cattle		Draught Bullock		Goat/Sheep		Buffalo		Fowl	
	No. of house holds owning	Total No.	No. of house holds owning	Total No.	No. of house holds owning	Total No.	No. of house holds owning	Total No.	No. of house holds owning	Total Number
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Irulas	42	108	19	38	22	86	1	2	73	143
Chakkiliar	2	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Koravar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pandaram	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	1
Okkaligas (Gudi)	18	86	22	132	13	80	6	8	17	54
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	5	34	5	42	3	10	1	1	3	25
Valayan	1	8	1	2	1	2	...	...	1	1
Shanar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Asari	...	...	...	...	1	10	...	...	1	2
Vannan	1	1	...	...	1	2	1	1	1	1
Navithar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...
Oddar	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5
Nair	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahmins	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Chettiar	2	7	1	8	1	3	1	1	1	2
Muslim	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...
Christian	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3
Total	73	252	48	222	45	197	10	13	104	240

The figures for 1951 and 1961 according to the *Quinquinneal Cattle Census* are as follows:

	1956	1961
Bulls	305	424
Cows	232	203
Bulls & Beifer under 4 years	208	192
He Buffaloes	39	54
She Buffaloes	25	17
Buffaloes under 4 years	9	12
Sheep	70	78
Goat	322	299

The number of cattle according to the present survey is found to be different from the number returned in the latest cattle Census. Table No. XXI gives the cattle and poultry owned by households belonging to various communities. The Okkaligas own the bulk of the cattle and next to them the Irulars.

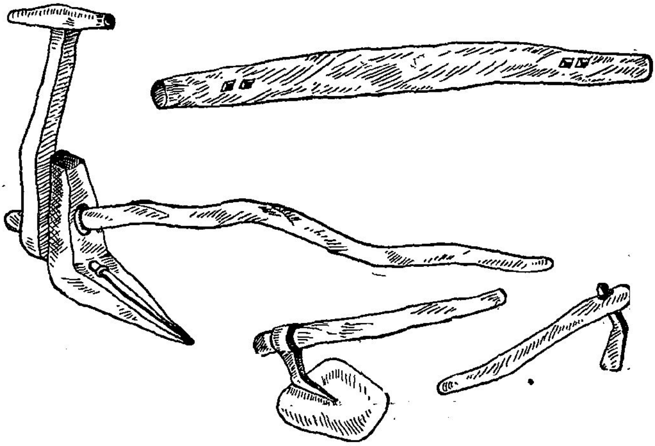
The large number of cattle in the village does not, however, imply that the village is rich in cattle wealth. The stock of the cattle is not of any classical breed. The cows are not good milk yielders. The deterioration of the stock has gone from generation to generation unchecked. The general deterioration of the cattle may be due to the following reasons:

1. Inadequate care of the animals by the owners;
2. Absence of select breeding;
3. Failure to import fresh good breeding stock from other places;
4. Economic backwardness of the owners;
5. Absence of marketing facilities for the milk. (The Bhavani river acts as a barrage for the daily transport of milk to the nearest town Mettupalayam)

A peculiarity of this village is that the draught animals from adjoining villages and towns are sent there and entrusted to the Irulas who are paid fixed amounts for the upkeep of the animals during the draught period. This system is in vogue because of the availability of pasture in the forest. The proximity of the forest, however, accounts for the death of a large number of cattle on account of depradations of wild animals.

Agricultural implements

48. As found in other villages, the agricultural implements used here are simple and outmoded. The hoes, pick-axes, crow-bars, sickles, bill-hooks and other common types of implements are found in almost all households, but the number of such implements depends upon the size of the holdings. Wooden ploughs, with a sharp iron rod inserted in it are used for ploughing the lands. Double bullock carts are used for transport of



Agricultural implements

TABLE No. XXII

Possession of land

Community	Name of interest on land	Number of households and extent of land											
		No Land	5 Cents & below	6-10 cents	11-20 cents	21-50 cents	51 cents to 1 acre	1·01-2·49 acres	2·50-4·99 acres	5 to 9·99 acres	10 & above	Area not stated	Total Households
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Irulas	1. Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
	2. Land held direct from Government under a tenure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	3. Land held from private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
	4. Land given out to private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	5. Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	6. Land held from Government and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	69	69
	7. No land	82	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	82
	Total	**82**	...	...	...	...	...	...	**1**	...	...	**70**	**153**
Other communities	1. Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	8	12	8	...	34
	2. Land held direct from Government under a tenure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	3. Land held from private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	1	5	9
	4. Land given out to private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
	5. Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	6. Land held from Government and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	7. No land	59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	59
	Total	**59**	...	...	...	...	...	**6**	**10**	**13**	**9**	**5**	**103**

Table No. XXII (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Village Total	1. Land owned	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	10	12	8	...	35
	2. Land held direct from Government under a tenure less substantial than ownership	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	3. Land held from private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	1	6	10
	4. Land given out to private persons or institutions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
	5. Land owned and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	6. Land held from Government and taken on lease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	69	69
	7. No Land	141	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	141
	Total	**141**	...	...	...	...	...	**6**	**12**	**13**	**9**	**75**	**256**

commodities from place to place. These are manufactured locally by the village carpenter. It is not possible for the Irulars in the forest areas to cultivate their lands with ploughs and other implements. They use pointed hoes for making furrows in the lands in which they sprinkle the seeds. They do very little of weeding. They reap what is left by the wild animals and birds.

Land distribution

49. Table No. XXII gives the distribution of land in the village. Out of 256 households, 146 of them do not own any land. Out of the 153 Irular households, 69 households are engaged in Kumri cultivation within the Reserved Forest. The lands cultivated by them do not belong to them but they are at liberty to clear the forest patches and cultivate them in small extents not exceeding the requirements of each household. In Nellithorai ten Okkaliga households cultivate lands by taking them on lease from others who own it. One household owning land has leased it out to somebody else and keeps quiet. The remaining 35 households own lands varying from one acre to about 30 acres. The distribution of lands in the 36 households owning lands in the various size classes is as follows:

Size of land	Percentage distribution
1 - 2·4 acres	13·9
2·5 - 4·99 acres	27·8
5·00 - 9·99 acres	36·1
10 acres and above	22·2

In this village, no one owns large extents of lands so as to attract the provisions of the Land Ceiling Act which fixes a ceiling of 30 'Standard Acres'. The bulk of the lands lying in this village, measuring 297 acres of wet lands and 363 acres of arecanut tope lands belong to 145 absentee pattadars living in Mettupalayam, Coimbatore and other places. The absentee pattadars cultivate their lands either by direct supervision or by leasing them out. When compared to the extent of paddy and arecanut tope lands owned by the absentee pattadars, the extent of such lands owned by the villagers living in the village itself is a small percentage.

Agricultural marketing

50. The production of commercial crops necessitates marketing of the surplus produce. Marketing has become an integral part of agriculture. Age-old methods of marketing still prevail in this area. The Farmer is handicapped by several disabilities as seller. He sells his produce at unfavourable places, unfavourable times and unfavourable prices. The absentee landlords carry away all their produces. The others sell their surplus in the village itself. Merchants from nearby marketing centres like Mettupalayam and other places visit the village at the time of harvest and purchase the surplus produce at a cheaper rate. The villagers also readily sell away their produce to these merchants, even though they are aware of the fact that they are selling at a lower rate because they are relieved of the trouble of storing it and taking it to the marketing centre. Due to the absence of a bridge across the Bhavani, transport of commodities presents the major problem. Arecanut, the chief cash crop produced in this village is marketed in the same way. Merchants from North India quite often visit these places during the season and purchase the produce. The Mettupalayam Co-operative Marketing and Salem Society also sells through its New Delhi Depot arecanuts produced on behalf of its members. It has specially opened a depot in New Delhi and transacts business at favourable prices. The Society allows the members to draw some advance at times against the produce and the amount is deducted from the sale proceeds. It charges its commission at a nominal rate for its services in marketing the produce. It also distributes chemical fertilisers to its members. As soon as the sale is effected, the Society after deducting the commission due to it and the advance, if any, credits to the member's account the balance of the sale proceeds. The advantages of marketing through the Marketing Society are increasingly felt by the arecanut producers of this village.

TABLE No. XXIII

Quantum of agricultural produce and their disposal

Description	Groundnut bags	Paddy bags	Horse gram bags	Cholam bags	Cotton bags	Ragi bags	Samai bags	Chillies bags	Thinai bags	Cumbu bags	Tobacco lbs.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1. Annual quantity produced	776	335	135	74	70	35	26	10	5	4	2,500
2. Annual quantity consumed by the producing households	16	230	...	72	...	35	26	...	5	4	...
3. Total annual quantity available for sale	760	105	135	2	70	...	...	10	...	...	2,500

Household business

51. The village does not have a weekly shandy (market). The nearest weekly shandy is at Mettupalayam which meets on Saturdays. The villagers of Nellithorai rarely visit this shandy. For buying their bulk requirements of household provisions, they visit Mettupalayam bazaar and buy them. Small articles of provisions required are purchased from the only provision shop in the village run by an Okkaliga. There are two other petty shops selling pan-supari, beedi, cigarettes, match box etc. One household is engaged in preparing Iddlies and selling them.

Basket making

52. From Table No. XX it can be seen that 8 persons belonging to Kurava community are engaged in basket making. They belong to the sub-sect of Dabba Kuravars. The bamboos required for the manufacture of baskets etc., are cut and removed from the Reserved Forests close by. For this, they have to pay a small fee to the Forest Department and take out a pass. The articles manufactured by them are baskets for domestic and agricultural use and 'Makri' which is fitted to double bullock carts for the purpose of carrying farm-yard manure to the fields. Within the village there is not much demand for these basketry articles. There is demand for certain other varieties of basketry items in Mettupalayam, but then there is the problem of transport to cross the river. So the Kuravars of this village are content to manufacture only those articles required by the villagers and go for agricultural labour on other days when they are not employed in basket making. The implements used by them for manufacturing the basketry items are a heavy iron knife called 'Vettu Kathi' for the purpose of cutting bamboos and a thin pointed knife called 'Ambu' used for the purpose of splitting bamboo into splinters. One pair of husband and wife, if they are fully engaged in this item of work, can earn about Rs. 2 daily.

Indebtedness

53. Government finance is made available to agriculturists under two Acts, viz., the Agriculturists Loans Act of 1884 and (2) the Land Improvement Loans Act of 1883. Under the Agriculturists Loans Act, loans upto a period of 10 years are granted to cultivators for the purchase of bullocks, seeds, manures etc. Loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act are mainly given for purposes like sinking wells, reclamation of land etc. The period of such developmental loans may run upto 20 years. In addition to this, funds are also advanced for installation of oil engines, pumpsets etc. Loans under the Governmental agency are sanctioned only on the security of immovable property of land, the amount of loan sanctioned being usually 50% of the value of the security offered. Out of 149 loans taken out by the villagers of Nellithorai, only three were taken from the Government under the above measures. Our enquiry in the village goes to show that the number of loans taken from Governmental agency is low because the procedure involved in getting a loan from Government is cumbersome and the restrictions placed in the matter of sanction of loans are too many. Further, even if a loan is sanctioned, the amount made available is not usually sufficient to meet the needs of the purpose for which the loan was sought. The villagers find it difficult in such cases to borrow supplementally from other sources. So many prefer not to go in for Government loans at all. The village has no Co-operative Credit Society. So no one has taken any loan from a Co-operative agency except one who has borrowed money from the Land Mortgage Bank at Mettupalayam at the rate of 5½%. This loan is for the land improvement purpose. The bulk of the other loans incurred by the villagers comes from private agency. Many needy persons go to private money-lenders because they are easily accessible. Their methods of business are simple and elastic. They maintain personal contact with borrowers and often have hereditary relations with the family. Their local knowledge and experience enable accommodation without much of difficulties. They keep the transactions secret and this the borrowers value most. The only drawback in taking loans from private agencies is the exhorbitant rate of interest charged. In this village, many have borrowed at rates varying from 24% to 36%. There are also two cases of borrowing from commercial banks where the rate of interest is about 12%. There are three other cases where the households have pledged their jewels and raised loans for the purpose of meeting cultivation expenses.

Incidence of debt

54. Table No. XXIV gives the position of indebtedness in the village community-wise and income group-wise. For the village as a whole, it may be seen that 148 households out of 256 making 57·8% of the households are in debts. The average debt per household in debt comes to Rs. 589·31. It could also be seen that the heaviness of debt increases with the income level. The lowest income group of Rs. 25 and below has an average debt of Rs. 77·06 and the highest income group of Rs. 101 and over has an average debt of Rs. 5,081·89.

On comparing the relative position of the communities, it may be seen that the Buddha Okkaligas have the highest incidence of debt. It is, however, learnt that these households have mostly invested these amounts on profitable outlays like improving the land, sinking wells etc. The quantum of debt per household is found to be heavy among the households of Christians, Chettiars, Valayan and

TABLE No. XXIV

Indebtedness

Caste/Tribe	Income group	Total No. of households	Number of households in debt.	Percentage of Col. 4 to Col. 3.	Total indebtedness	Average indebtedness for household in debt
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
					Rs.	Rs. nP.
Irular	Rs. 25 & below	28	13	46·43	780	60·00
	,, 26 — 50	120	78	65·00	5,358	68·69
	,, 51 — 75	4	3	75·00	185	61·67
	,, 76 — 100	1	1	100·00	25	25·00
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**153**	**95**	**62·09**	**6,348**	**66·82**
Chakkiliar	Rs. 25 & below	3	2	66·67	400	200·00
	,, 26 — 50	4	1	25·00	40	40·00
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**7**	**3**	**42·86**	**440**	**146·67**
Koravar	Rs. 25 & below	2	1	50·00	80	80·00
	,, 26 — 50	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**3**	**1**	**33·33**	**80**	**80·00**
Pandaram	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**1**	...	...	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	Rs. 25 & below	6	1	16·67	50	50·00
	,, 26 — 50	31	18	58·06	4,990	277·22
	,, 51 — 75	7	6	85·71	3,800	633·33
	,, 76 — 100	2	2	100·00	2,000	1,000·00
	,, 101 & over	5	5	100·00	9,400	1,880·00
	Total	**51**	**32**	**62·75**	**20,240**	**632·50**
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	3	2	66·67	1,500	750·00
	,, 51 — 75	2	1	50·00	4,500	4,500·00
	,, 76 — 100	1	1	100·00	5,000	5,000·00
	,, 101 & over	6	4	66·67	42,500	10,625·00
	Total	**12**	**8**	**66·67**	**53,500**	**6,687·50**
Valayan	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	5	1	20·00	1,000	1,000·00
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**5**	**1**	**20·00**	**1,000**	**1,000·00**

Table No. XXIV (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Shanar	Rs. 25 & below	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	1	1	100·00	100	100·00
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**2**	**1**	**50·00**	**100**	**100·00**
Asari	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	1	1	100·00	40	40·00
	,, 51 — 75	1	1	100·00	200	200·00
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**2**	**2**	**100·00**	**240**	**120·00**
Vannan	Rs. 25 & below	2	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**2**	...	...	...	...
Navithar	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total		...	...	...	...
Sembadavan	Rs. 25 & below	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**1**	...	...	...	...
Oddar	Rs. 25 & below	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	1	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**1**	...	...	...	...
Konga Vellala	Rs. 25 & below	3	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50	2	1	50·00	270	270·00
	,, 51 — 75	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100	...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over	1	...	...	...	...
	Total	**6**	**1**	**16·67**	**270**	**270·00**

Table No. XXIV (Contd.)

(1)	(2)		(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Nair	Rs. 25 & below		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75		1	1	100·00	500	500·00
	,, 76 — 100		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over		...	...	...	...	...
		Total	**1**	**1**	**100·00**	**500**	**500·00**
Brahmin	Rs. 25 & below		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75		1	1	100·00	500	500·00
	,, 76 — 100		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over		1	...	...	...	...
		Total	**2**	**1**	**50·00**	**500**	**500·00**
Chettiar	Rs. 25 & below		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50		1	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over		2	1	50·00	2,000	2,000·00
		Total	**3**	**1**	**33·33**	**2,000**	**2,000·00**
Muslim	Rs. 25 & below		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75		1	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over		1	...	...	...	...
		Total	**2**	...	...	...	...
Christian	Rs. 25 & below		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 26 — 50		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 51 — 75		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 76 — 100		...	...	...	...	...
	,, 101 & over		1	1	100·00	2,000	2,000·00
		Total	**1**	**1**	**100·00**	**2,000**	**2,000·00**
Village Total	Rs. 25 & below		46	17	36·96	1,310	77·06
	,, 26 — 50		171	103	60·23	13,298	129·11
	,, 51 — 75		18	13	72·22	9,685	745·00
	,, 76 — 100		4	4	100·00	7,025	1,756·25
	,, 101 & over		17	11	64·71	55,900	5,081·89
		Total	**256**	**148**	**57·81**	**87,218**	**589·31**

Gudi Okkaligas. It could also be seen that among the Irulars although the incidence of debt in the households is heavy, the quantum of debt per household is not so heavy. But it has to be remembered that these debts incurred by the Irulars are not on any profitable outlay but only for family maintenance.

Income

55. Although the village contains plenty of fertile paddy lands and rich arecanut topes, the ownership of these belong mostly to absentee pattadars. The lands owned by the people living within the village are meagre being only 26% of the total private lands. So the income level of the households is bound to be low in most cases. Table No. XXV gives the income pattern of the households pursuing the different occupations.

For the village as a whole, the distribution of households in the various income groups is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	18·0
Rs. 26 – 50	66·8
Rs. 51 – 75	7·0
Rs. 76 – 100	1·6
Rs. 101 & over	6·6

The bulk of the households comes in the income group of Rs. 26-50. The number of families coming in the lowest income group of Rs. 25 or less is also large.

In comparison to the number of households in the income group of Rs. 76–100, the number of households in the income group of Rs. 101 and over is found to be large. The predominant occupation of the village is cultivation. Let us see how the households pursuing cultivation of own lands are distributed in the various income groups. The percentage distribution of households doing personal cultivation is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	12·9
Rs. 26 – 50	65·6
Rs. 51 – 75	6·5
Rs. 76 – 100	3·2
Rs. 101 & above	11·8

The distribution more or less follows the pattern for the whole village except that in the lowest income group, the distribution among the cultivating households is less and that in the highest income group, the distribution among the cultivating households is slightly more. The percentage distribution of the households in the various income groups, pursuing occupations of plantation labour, general cooly and agricultural labour which are similar in nature is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	21·5
Rs. 26 – 50	73·1
Rs. 51 – 75	4·6
Rs. 76 – 100	0·8
Rs. 101 & over	...

It is seen that nearly 95% of the households have incomes less than Rs. 50 in this category of occupation.

Table No. XXVI gives the monthly income of the households by communities. The distribution of Irular households in the various income groups is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	18·3
Rs. 26 – 50	78·4
Rs. 51 – 75	2·6
Rs. 76 – 100	0·7
Rs. 101 & over	...

This shows that nearly 97% of the Irular households come in the income group of Rs. 50 or less. In comparison to this, the position among Gudi Okkaligas is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	11·8
Rs. 26 – 50	60.8
Rs. 51 – 75	13·7
Rs. 76 – 100	3·9
Rs. 101 & over	9·8

The distribution in this community is more balanced than that for the Irulars. Lastly we shall see how the Lingayath Okkaligas who rank foremost

TABLE No. XXV

Income pattern of the households by occupation of the households

Occupation of the households	Total No. of households	Monthly income per household in the range of				
		Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 26–50	Rs. 51–75	Rs. 76–100	Rs. 101 & over
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Cultivation	93	12	61	6	3	11
Plantation labourer	64	10	51	2	1	...
General cooly	42	11	28	3	...	...
Agricultural labourer	24	7	16	1	...	...
Lease cultivation	9	...	8	1	...	...
Basket making	3	2	1	...	...	...
Station Master	3	...	...	...	...	3
Gangman	3	...	...	2	...	1
Merchant	2	...	1	...	...	1
Carpenter	2	...	1	1	...	...
Forest Guard	1	...	...	1	...	...
Tailor	1	...	1	...	...	...
Rice cake selling	1	1	...	...	...	...
Dhoby	1	1	...	...	...	...
Barber	1	...	1	...	...	...
Fisherman	1	1	...	...	...	...
Shepherd	1	...	1	...	...	...
Watchman	1	...	1	...	...	...
Mason	1	..	...	...	..	1
Dependant	2	1	...	1	...	...
Total	**256**	**46**	**171**	**18**	**4**	**17**

MONTHLY INCOME OF A HOUSEHOLD

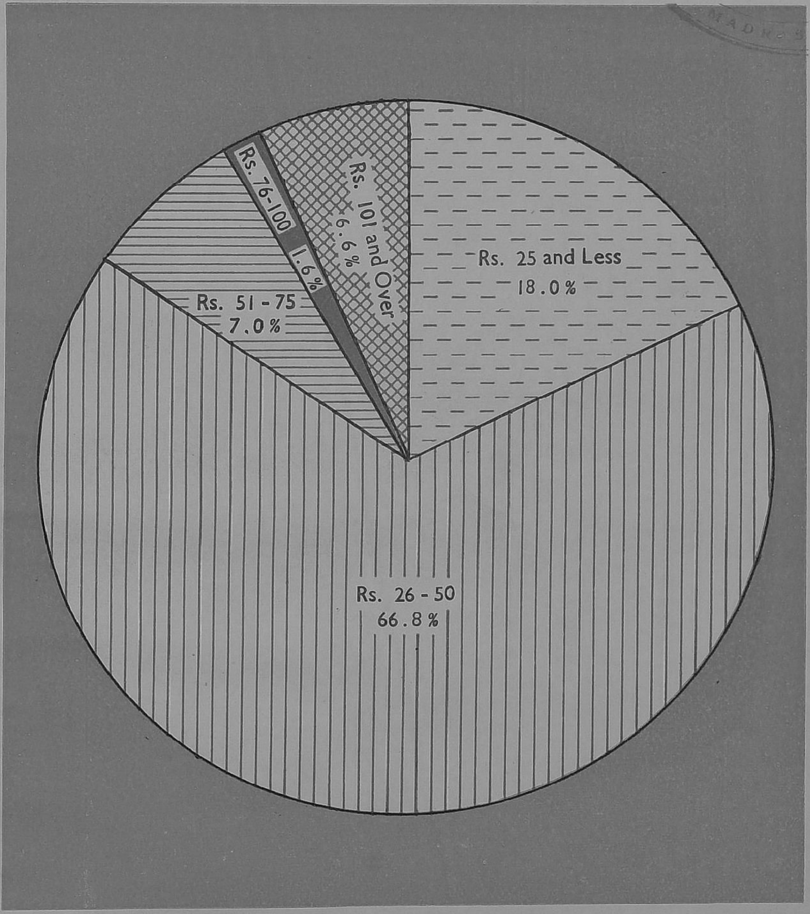


TABLE No. XXVI

Monthly income per household by community

Community	Total No. of households	Occupation of the household	Source of income	Monthly income per household in the range of: Rs. 25 or less	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 101 & over
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Irulars	153	Cultivation	Land	10	51	2	...	...
		Plantation labourer	Land	10	51	2	1	...
		Ordinary cooly	...	7	18	...	...	...
		Dependant	...	1	...	...	...	...
Chakkiliar	7	Cultivation	Land	1	...	...	...	...
		Agricultural labourer	Land	2	1	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	...	3	...	...	...
Kuravan	3	Basket making	...	2	1	...	...	...
Pandaram	1	Forest Guard	...	...	...	1	...	...
Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	Cultivation	Land	...	8	3	2	5
		Lease cultivation	,,	...	7	1	...	...
		Agricultural labourer	,,	3	10	1	...	...
		Tailor	...	...	1	...	...	...
		Rice cake selling	...	1	...	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	2	5	2	...	...
Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	Cultivation	Land	...	...	1	1	5
		Lease cultivation	,,	...	1	...	...	...
		Agricultural labourer	,,	...	1	...	...	...
		Business	...	...	1	...	...	...
		Station Master	...	...	...	...	...	1
		Gangman	...	...	...	1	...	...
Valayan	5	Cultivation	Land	...	1	...	...	...
		Agricultural labourer	,,	...	3	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	...	1	...	...	...

Table No. XXVI (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Shanar	2	Cultivation	Land	1	...	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	...	1	...	...	...
Asari	2	Carpenter	...	...	1	1	...	...
Vannan	2	Dhoby	...	1	...	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	1	...	...	...	...
Navithar	1	Barber	...	...	1	...	...	...
Sembadavan	1	Fisherman	...	1	...	...	...	...
Oddar	1	Agricultural labourer	Land	...	1	...	...	...
Konga vellala	6	Agricultural labourer	Land	2	..	...	...	...
		Shepherd	...	...	1	...	...	...
		Gangman	...	...	...	...	...	1
		Watchman	...	...	1	...	...	...
		General cooly	...	1	...	...	...	...
Nair	1	Gangman	...	...	...	1	...	...
Brahmin	2	Station Master	...	...	...	...	...	1
		Dependant	...	...	...	1	...	...
Chettiar	3	Cultivation	...	...	1	...	...	1
		Merchant	...	...	...	...	...	1
Muslim	2	Mason	...	...	...	...	...	1
		General labourer	...	...	...	1	...	...
Christian	1	Station Master	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total	256			46	171	18	4	17

in the village are distributed. For them the distribution is as follows:

Income group	Percentage distribution
Rs. 25 or less	...
Rs. 26 - 50	25·0
Rs. 51 - 75	16.7
Rs. 76 - 100	8.3
Rs. 101 & over	50.0

This represents the most favourable distribution for any one community in the village.

Expenditure

56. Table No. XXVII gives the expenditure pattern of the households for the village as a whole.

TABLE No. XXVII

Average monthly expenditure per household by income groups

Item of expenditure	All households: No. of households	All households: Expenditure per household	Percentage of expenditure on food/miscellaneous items		Rs. 25 or less: No. of households	Rs. 25 or less: Average expenditure	Rs. 26-50: No. of households	Rs. 26-50: Average expenditure	Rs. 51-75: No. of households	Rs. 51-75: Average expenditure	Rs. 76-100: No. of households	Rs. 76-100: Average expenditure	Rs. 101 & over: No. of households	Rs. 101 & over: Average expenditure
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
		Rs.				Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
Food	256	31.72	8,119.23	67.73	46	17.35	171	27.25	18	37.18	4	55.84	17	104.02
Clothing	256	7.04	1,803.35	15.04	46	2.64	171	4.26	18	9.33	4	12.50	17	43.29
Lighting	255	1.90	484.28	4.04	46	1.20	171	1.56	18	1.93	4	2.71	16	7.29
Fuel	46	4.64	213.21	1.78	1	0.83	16	1.71	11	2.08	2	5.42	16	9.46
Luxuries	252	3.35	844.67	7.05	46	1.94	171	2.76	18	3.24	4	4.07	13	16.09
Others	147	3.56	523.16	4.36	11	1.02	101	1.65	15	3.41	4	8.86	16	16.20
Total	**256**	**46.83**	**11,987.90**	**100.00**	**46**	**23.38**	**171**	**36.97**	**18**	**55.79**	**4**	**86.67**	**17**	**190.62**

It is seen that the expenditure on food comes to 67·7% of the total expenditure. This is not so bad as we observed in some of the very backward villages in Salem district. The reason for the comparatively low expenditure on food in this village may be because the Irulars form the bulk of the population and these tribals subsist for a large number of days in a year on roots and other edible things collected in the forest which have no marketable value otherwise. The expenditure on food to the total expenditure in the various income groups is as follows:

Income group	Percentage of expenditure on food to the total expenditure
Rs. 25 or less	74·2
Rs. 26 - 50	73·7
Rs. 51 - 75	66·6
Rs. 76 - 100	64·4
Rs. 101 & over	54·6

This shows that the percentage of expenditure on food to the total expenditure decreases as the income

increases. In the village it is also seen that the expenditure on clothing is appreciable coming to 15·0%. The expenditure on luxuries is also pretty high.

Table No. XXVIII gives the expenditure incurred on marriages. The table gives the differential position for the Irulars and for the other communities. For the Irulars the normal expenditure for a marriage

TABLE No. XXVIII

Expenditure on marriage

Amount of expenditure on marriage		Number of households with a monthly income of					
		Rs. 25 and below	Rs. 26–50	Rs. 51–75	Rs. 76–100	Rs. 101 & over	Total No. of households
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Irular	Nil	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 50 or less	14	71	2	...	...	87
	Rs. 51 – 100	10	43	...	1	...	54
	Rs. 101 – 200	4	4	1	...	...	9
	Rs. 201 – 400	...	2	...	...	...	2
	Rs. 401 – 600	...	...	1	...	...	1
	Rs. 601 – 800	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 801 –1000	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 1,001 & over	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	**28**	**120**	**4**	**1**	...	**153**
Other communities	Nil	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 50 or less	1	1	1	...	...	3
	Rs. 51 – 100	5	9	...	...	...	14
	Rs. 101 – 200	8	9	2	...	...	19
	Rs. 201 – 400	2	12	2	...	1	17
	Rs. 401 – 600	2	13	1	...	2	18
	Rs. 601 – 800	...	1	2	1	1	5
	Rs. 801 –1000	...	6	5	...	4	15
	Rs. 1,001 & over	...	...	1	2	9	12
	Total	**18**	**51**	**14**	**3**	**17**	**103**
Village Total	Nil	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 50 or less	15	72	3	...	...	90
	Rs. 51 – 100	15	52	...	1	...	68
	Rs. 101 – 200	12	13	3	...	...	28
	Rs. 201 – 400	2	14	2	...	1	19
	Rs. 401 – 600	2	13	2	...	2	19
	Rs. 601 – 800	...	1	2	1	1	5
	Rs. 801 –1000	...	6	5	...	4	15
	Rs. 1,001 & over	...	...	1	2	9	12
	Total	**46**	**171**	**18**	**4**	**17**	**256**

TABLE No. XXIX

Expenditure on festivals

Amount of expenditure on festivals		Number of households with a monthly income of				
		Rs. 25 & below	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76-100	Rs. 101 & over
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Irular	Nil	...	1	...	...	...
	Below Rs. 5	1	2	...	...	...
	Rs. 6 - 10	12	14	...	...	...
	Rs. 11 - 20	12	69	2	...	...
	Rs. 21 - 30	3	27	1	1	...
	Rs. 31 - 40	...	3	...	...	...
	Rs. 41 - 50	...	4	1	...	...
	Rs. 51 -100	...	...	...	...	...
	Rs. 101 & over	...	...	...	...	...
	Total	28	120	4	1	...
Other communities	Nil	...	...	...	...	1
	Below Rs. 5	1	...	1	...	...
	Rs. 6 - 10	1	2	1	...	...
	Rs. 11 - 20	4	12	...	...	...
	Rs. 21 - 30	5	10	2	...	2
	Rs. 31 - 40	...	...	...	...	1
	Rs. 41 - 50	6	13	5	...	1
	Rs. 51 -100	1	11	3	...	2
	Rs. 101 & over	...	3	2	3	10
	Total	18	51	14	3	17
Village Total	Nil	...	1	...	...	1
	Below Rs. 5	2	2	1	...	...
	Rs. 6 - 10	13	16	1	...	...
	Rs. 11 - 20	16	81	2	...	...
	Rs. 21 - 30	8	37	3	1	2
	Rs. 31 - 40	...	3	...	...	1
	Rs. 41 - 50	6	17	6	...	1
	Rs. 51 -100	1	11	3	...	2
	Rs. 101 & over	...	3	2	3	10
	Total	46	171	18	4	17

appears to be Rs. 100. For the other communities the expenditure seems to vary depending upon the income level and social status of the household. The Okkaligas as a whole are learnt to be spending a little more than what they can normally afford to.

Indices of prosperity

57. As already mentioned, the village is peculiar not only in its situation, but also in its composition of the population. There are two completely different sections of population, one the tribals (Irulars) and the other the Okkaligas Gowders. So it has become necessary to differentiate the two sections and discuss about their socio-economic conditions. The life of the Irulars in the forest settlements is more static. For ages they were living in these settlements with wild animals as their sole companions. Opportunities to improve though limited in scope are not availed of by them. They lack initiative. They neither own lands nor do they have any stable occupation to keep them going for the year. The Forest Department has allowed them to cultivate a few plots of lands. But the produce that finally reaches their houses is meagre. As soon as the produce is exhausted, they go in search of wild tubers and yams which can be found in the forest. This sustains them till the next harvest. They hardly possess any money to buy their clothing. But whenever, they happen to visit village shandies they used to exchange their forest produce for clothing. Of late, however, the Irulars are engaging themselves in the unskilled civil works of the Kundah Project.

The non-tribal people of Nellithorai can be grouped into three divisions according to their standard of living. They are :—

1. The lower strata of working class people;
2. The middle class;
3. The upper strata of big land owners.

Agricultural labourers and unskilled labourers of all communities come under the first group. They work in the fields for daily wages and it is the only source of living for them. What they earn as wages is just sufficient to provide for the necessities of life and even then to some families is insufficient. For them any type of luxury is beyond their limits. They form the bulk of the population of the village. The small land owning class come under the second group. They form a fair percentage of the remaining population. These people are well provided with the essentials of life, but they cannot have any luxuries. They, however, are the people who are in debts. Five or six Okkaliga Gowders only come under the last group. They are the owners of a few arecanut topes and paddy fields. They form a minor section of the population. They are able to possess, besides all necessities, modern furnitures, radios etc. One of them even owns a motor car.

From an overall analysis, it is found the upper strata of population form only a minor group and so they are not the deciding factor of the economic condition of the village. So is the case with the second group. The predominant element is, however, the first group of agricultural labourer and the Irulars who are basically poor. Their standard of living cannot be considered to have improved during the past decade. A village which can boast of rich fertile lands holds only poor people. This is the index of prosperity of this village.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Caste Panchayat

58. Social discipline among the members of many castes is subject to the control of the Caste Panchayat which though weakened in recent times has not died out altogether. The Gudi Okkaligas of Nellithorai have a Caste Panchayat. They have a heirarchy starting from an *Oor Goundan* for the village to *Pattakaran* for the entire caste. The Okkaligas of Nellithorai have also an Oor Goundan whose office transcends by heredity. For every ten villages they have a headman called *Katta Mane*. Over the Katta Mane is the Pattakaran. If there is any dispute of social nature between the members of the community in a village, the Oor Goundan sends intimation to all the heads of households intimating that a meeting of the Panchayat will take place in a public place near the temple. The intimation is sent through an assistant under him called *Bandari*. At the appointed time, the elders of the village, presided over by the Oor Goundan hear the dispute, enquire the witnesses, take into consideration the statements of persons involved in it and decide who is at fault. The Oor Goundan then levies a fine taking into consideration the gravity of the offence and the status of the accused. As soon as the Oor Goundan announces the levy of a fine, which usually happens to be high, the affected person prostrates before the assembly and prays for a reduction of fine. The Oor Goundan then reduces the fine taking into consideration the number of times the accused person prostrated before the assembly. The act of prostrating before the assembly for the purpose of getting the fine reduced, is called by them *Addam Vizhuthal*. After this process of reduction, a small fine is levied and collected by the Oor Goundan. The fine is utilised for the common good of the village. In cases of offences of a serious nature like adultery, beating with sandal or committing theft, the council of elders may apply imposition of social and economic sanction which is called *Oor Kattu*. The dhoby will not then wash his clothes; the barber will not shave him; the shop will not sell provisions to him. He will be denied all amenities in the village. The Katta Mane and the Pattakaran generally do not attend such Caste Panchayat meetings. They are invited only in cases where the disputes cannot be resolved otherwise by the council of elders presided over by the Oor Goundan. The Irulars likewise have a tribal panchayat. The head of the village is called *Moopan*. The members of a settlement are generally subject to his discipline. He functions as a benevolent dictator. He not only presides over the tribal Caste Panchayat for resolving disputes but also acts as the first man in all social ceremonies like marriages, funeral ceremonies etc. When there is a case for divorce, it is the Moopan who decrees it in the presence of the village elders. Since the number of members in the other communities in this village is small, they do not have separate caste panchayats within the village. The Lingayath Okkaligas formerly professed loyalty to the Caste Panchayat of the Gudi Okkaligas, but they have now disowned it and they say that they are not subject to the discipline of the Pattakaran. Their caste heads are said to be *Sivachars* living in Mysore. In recent times no dispute among them has occurred to warrant the intervention of any Caste Panchayat.

Statutory Panchayat

59. Till very recently, Nellithorai did not have a Statutory Panchayat. One was formed six months back. It has not done anything worth mentioning to the villagers so far. But it has under its consideration many developmental schemes for execution. The election of the members was unanimous. Three Okkaligas, one Chettiar and one Irular were elected to this Panchayat as members. The President is an Okkaliga. The Vice-President is also an Okkaliga. The following is the Schematic Budget for the year 1961-62:

Income

Opening balance	...	Rs. 1,172·20
House tax	...	„ 415·00
Vehicle tax	...	„ 115·00
Profession tax	...	„ 50·00
Sale of compost	...	„ 34·00
Advance from Government	...	„ 200·00
Surcharge on land cess	...	„ 1,200·00
Matching grant to house-tax	...	„ 415·00
Revenue from the ferry	...	„ 1,201·00

Expenditure

Pay of a clerk	...	Rs.	180·00
Travelling expenses	...	„	75·00
Contingency	...	„	60·00
Stationery	...	„	20·00
Tools and implements	...	„	250·00
Postage	...	„	6·00
Advances to be repaid	...	„	20·00
Expenditure on village sanitation	...	„	1,000·00
Street maintenance	...	„	1,300·00
Closing balance	...	„	1,715·20

The members are eager to derive the full benefits of the Panchayat Raj. They are looking forward to greater aids from the Panchayat Union for the development of the village.

Developmental activities

60. Nellithorai comes under the Karamadai Panchayat Union which came into existence only on 2nd October 1961. As yet the Panchayat Union has not done anything of a developmental nature in the village, although the people are eager to benefit from the schemes contemplated by the Union. Temperamentally the villagers are found to be responsive to developmental work. But as the village is far away from the Block Headquarters and as there is the barrier of the unbridged river, the benefits of the Community Project are bound to reach the village late.

Table No. XXX, gives the number of households which have introduced developments in the field of agriculture.

TABLE No. XXX

Developmental activities

Community	Total No. of households	Secured: Better irrigation facilities	Better types of cattle	Better seeds	Better implements	Better manure	More land for cultivation	Use of pesticides	Improved method of cultivation	Other implements
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1. Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	2	2	1	...	...	2	...	...	...
2. Okkaligas (Lingayath)	12	5	5	1	1	1	1	...	1	...
3. Chettiar	3	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4. Dhoby	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Total	68	8	8	2	1	1	4	...	1	...

But actually these were introduced even before the Developmental Block came into existence. From this Table, it could be seen that the Buddha Okkaligas are the most pioneering in the field of progressive farming. The village contains a sizeable population of a backward Scheduled Tribe. The Harijan Welfare Department which is charged with the task of Tribal Welfare has not extended any of their schemes to this area. As pointed out earlier, the location of a Tribal Welfare Residential School in the midst of their surroundings is bound to have the desired effect in their upliftment.

Type of living

61. Table No. XXXI gives the type of living in the various communities of Nellithorai.

TABLE No. XXXI

Types of families

Caste/tribe		Total No. of households	Types of families living in the household			
			Simple	Intermediate	Joint	Others
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
HINDUS	Irular	153	118	16	7	12
	Chakkiliar	7	6	...	...	1
	Kuravar	3	2	...	...	1
	Pandaram	1	1	...	...	...
	Okkaligas (Gudi)	51	30	11		9
	,, ,, (Lingayath)	12	5	5	1	1
	Valayan	5	2	...	1	2
	Shanar	2	2	...	...	...
	Asari	2	2	...	...	...
	Vannan	2	1	...	...	1
	Navithar	1	...	...	...	
	Sembadavan	1	...	...	1	...
	Oddar	1	1	...	...	...
	Konga vellala	6	4	...	...	2
	Nair	1	1	...	...	...
	Brahmins	2	2	...	...	...
	Chettiar	3	2	...	1	...
	Muslims	2	2	...	...	...
	Christians	1	1	...	...	...
	Total	**256**	**182**	**32**	**12**	**30**

The households are divided into four categories depending upon the way of living. A 'Simple Family' can be defined as one with one married couple with or without their children. A 'Joint Family' on the other hand is defined as one containing more than one married couple with or without their children. An 'Intermediate Type' is a simple family in which one or more close relations come to live with the family. All other types of families are classed under 'Others'. For the village as a whole, it is seen that out of 256 households, 182 households, working out to 71·1% come under the category of 'Simple Families'. This type is more popular among the Irulars where the percentage of simple families comes to 77·1%. In this tribe, the custom is to put the sons to live separately in newly constructed houses as soon as they get married. They do not have housing difficulties. Vacant lands are available in the village site and the materials required for the construction of houses can be procured locally without any difficulty. Even in the case of seven households in which 'Joint Family' system is practised among Irulars, the couples sleep in separate huts although they may be having joint cooking.

Intra-family relationship

62. In all the communities met with in Nellithorai, the eldest male member is deemed as the head of the household unless he is too old. In all important matters, he exercises his authority over the other members of the household. In the low-income groups, women-folk help the male members in their earnings, but the management of the household primarily rests upon the male member. The household duties are, however, looked after by the women-folk. She usually addresses the male partner respectfully in plural, but this custom is found not to exist among the Irulars. In all other castes, the wife will not even pronounce the name of her husband. As between the father and son, the son addresses the father in plural though he may address the mother in singular. He consults the father on all important matters. The relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is always respectful but cases in which there is strained relationship are not wanting. In all important social functions the maternal uncle takes an active part. In fact, he has got specific rites to perform on these occasions. In all the communities, preferential marrying of the maternal uncle's daughter and next to it the paternal aunt's daughter exists. Marrying of the sister's daughter is rare, but it is not prohibited.

Inheritance

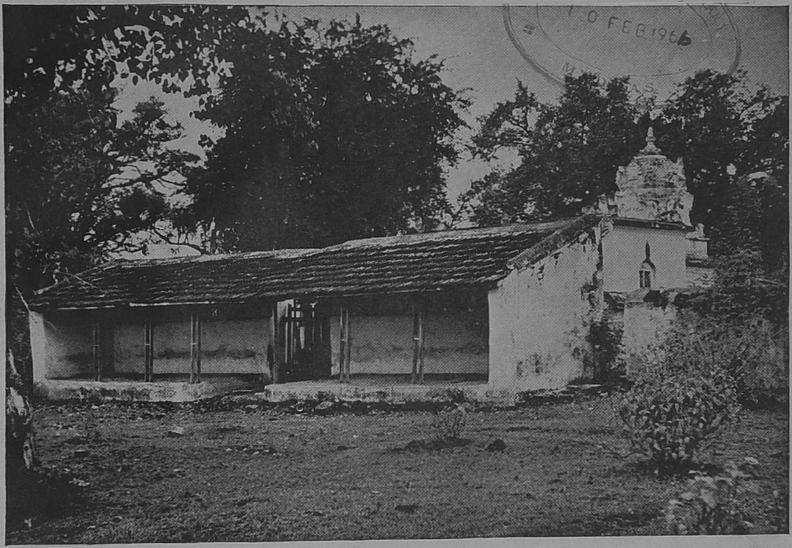
63. Among the Irulars, no one has any property left for inheritance. But even then the law of inheritance is by the male line. In other communities also, the property transcends by the male line. The new law of Hindu Succession has not so far made any impact. There is no case in which a daughter inherits the property of her father along with that of her brothers. Females inherit their father's property only when he has no male issues. Most households in the village are not aware of the provisions of the newly enacted Hindu Law of Succession. But even in cases where the household are aware of it, they are not followed.

Leisure and Recreation

64. Working class people, however poor they are, are not lacking in recreational activities. This they do to relieve themselves of the monotony of work. During moon-lit nights, the men folk play *Kilithattu* and *Chadukudu.* The Irulars indulge in group dancing with drums and pipes. The women-folk perform *Kummi* by reciting folk-songs. The indoor games played by Okkaliga women-folk are *Pallanguzhi* and *Thayakattam*. Some play *Paramapadha Sobana Padam*. The village has no reading room or recreation centre established under the auspices of the Community Development Block. Whenever the people get a chance to go to Mettupalayam, they avail of the occasion to see a cinema. A few in the village occasionally indulge in card games for small stakes.

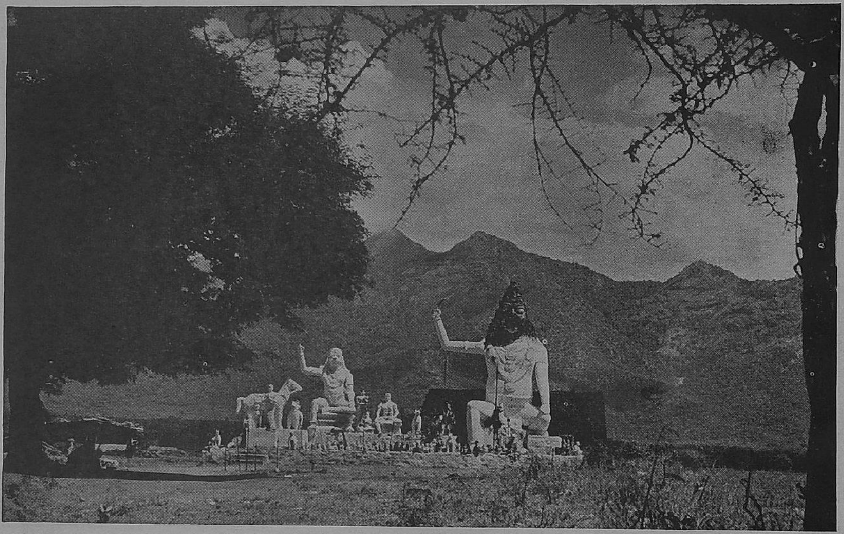
Religion and Festivals

65. Except for the one Christian, two Muslim households who live at Adderly, all the others in Nellithorai and other forest settlements belong to Hinduism. The Irulars have got animistic tendencies, but now-a-days they are taking to the worship of Brahminical gods. In this they exhibit a tendency to worship Vaishnavite gods. They visit the Vishnu temples at Karamadai and Palamalai. The Gudi Okkaligas worship both Siva and Vishnu, but the Lingayath Okkaligas being strong Saivites worship only Siva. The other Hindu communities cannot be classed either as Saivites or as Vaishnavites. They worship the gods of both sects. The festivals observed by the non-tribals are Deepavali, Thai Pongal, Ugadhi, Karthigai Deepam, Sivarathri etc. For Deepavali newly married couples are invited and presented with new clothes. Crackers are burnt. Extra sweet dishes are prepared on the occasion



Malleswara temple.

Badrakali Amman temple.



Terra-cotta images of Muniappan.

Offerings made to Badrakali Amman by childless couples.

and eaten. For Thai Pongal, rice is cooked ceremoniously and offered on the first day to the Sun God and on the second day to the cattle which are washed and tethered on the yard. For Ugadhi which is the Telugu New Year's Day, they eat flowers of margosa mixed with jaggery. On the Karthigai Deepam day, a number of wick oil lamps are lit in front of the house. Children swing torches made of palm-flowers which burn with effervesence. All these festivals except Pongal are, however, not celebrated by the Irulars. Once in a year, they celebrate a festival for the *Vana Devatha*, sacrificing chicken. The village has eight temples, but none of them enjoys any annual festival. The *Badra Kali* temple which lies outside the village is visited by them. If anybody has an unfulfilled wish, like having a child, he or she remembers this Goddess and takes a vow. When the vow is fulfilled they offer cradles as a token of gratitude for the benevolent goddess which fulfilled their wishes.

Inter-caste relationship

66. Though different communities live in this village, practically no faction exists. Cordial relationship exists between all these communities in the running of the Panchayat and in the celebration of the festivals. Numerically the Irulars are the strongest, but they live in remote forest settlements and they practically do not come in the picture of the administration of Nellithorai. They are employed by the Okkaligas and others in arecanut topes and in other agricultural operations. They are treated as a set of inferior people though not as untouchables. The Irulars, however timid they are, are not afraid of the caste Hindus and exhibit a sort of unconcerned attitude towards them. The relationship between the Irulars and the non-Irulars is, however, generally cordial though not intimate. Social contacts are few. Occasionally an Irular may approach some Okkaliga for a small loan to tide over a lean month, but apart from that the Irulars do not come in contact in the social life of others. The Chakkiliars are treated as untouchables and they are made to live separately. The Valayars, Kuravars, Vannan and Navithan have a slightly inferior status in the social heirarchy. But they are allowed to take water from the wells and are not treated as untouchables. The Lingayath Okkaligas are treated as a superior caste in Nellithorai. They are vegetarians and profess to be Veera Saivites. They do not eat in the houses of others. Economically also they are far ahead of the Gudi Okkaligas. This advantageous position gives them the leadership of the village. The President of the Panchayat also is a member of this community. In spite of the social and economic superiority they enjoy, the Lingayath Okkaligas have adjusted themselves to the conditions prevailing in the village and they generally strive for the good of the village.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

67. Nellithorai is a quiet village in a secluded corner of the district. Although it is within four miles of the flourishing town of Mettupalayam, it has the least urban impact because of the unbridged river separating the village from the rest of the area. It enjoys a beautiful scenery. The major portion of Nellithorai tract is covered by dense forest. Cultivable lands are fertile. The yield is high. Arecanut cultivation is a special feature of the village. The tract was once malarial and the people were afraid of living there. But now conditions have improved. The people are returning to the village. The predominant community in the village is the Irulars, who live in interior forest settlements. They are not without contact with the non-tribals living in Nellithorai. Their conditions have not improved considerably in the past ten years, in spite of the improvement in the health conditions. Two Power Houses under the Kundah Hydro Electric Schemes are being erected in their locality. But the participation of the people in their erection is practically negligible. The Okkaligas who form the next important community are socially dominant. They are hard working people. But their living conditions have not also improved considerably as three-fourth of the lands in this village belong to absentee land-lords living elsewhere in Mettupalayam and Coimbatore. There is no other cottage industry, or trade to improve the living conditions of the people. Though the people find adequate labour in the arecanut topes and in the paddy fields, their conditions do not appear to have improved in recent years.

APPENDIX I

CENSUS 1961—SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

Household Schedule

Name of village :

Serial Number of Household :

L. C. No.

Name of Taluk/District in which it is situated.

1. *Approximate* dimensions of the house :

   Number of rooms in the house :

   Number of households residing in the house.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSEHOLD :

Name	Age	Relationship to head	Marital status	Age at marriage	Literacy & education	Occupation		Income	
						Primary	Secondary.	Primary	Secondary.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1. Head									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									
9.									
10.									

III. DURATION OF RESIDENCE :

(*a*) Does the family previously belong to this village ?

(*b*) If not, from where did they migrate to this village ? (Give name of village, town, taluk and district.)

(*c*) When and why did they migrate ?

IV. LANGUAGE

	1st member	2nd member	3rd member	4th member	5th member
What languages can each member of the family :-					
(*a*) Read, write and speak.					
(*b*) Speak only.					
(*c*) Examinations passed in languages under (a)					

V. DIET :

(*a*) How many times do they take meals in a day ?

(*b*) What are the main constituents of their food ?

(*c*) How many times a week do they consume non-vegetarian food ?

(*d*) Is any article of food forbidden ? If so, which and why ?

(*e*) Do the members of the family chew pan regularly ?

(*f*) What are the oils and fats commonly used for cooking ?

(*g*) What types of utensils are used for cooking and household use :-

(*a*) Earthenware.

(*b*) Aluminium ware.

(*c*) Copper.

(*d*) Brass.

VI. DRESS :

(a) What are the types of dresses usually worn by :

(1) Males.

(2) Females.

(b) Is there any special dress for festival occasions ?

(c) What types of ornaments are worn ?

VII. LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY :

(a) Does the household own any cattle? (Give numbers and types.)

(b) What other domesticated animals does the household keep in? (The numbers and types to be specified)

VIII. MARRIAGE :

(a) Has any inter-communal marriages taken place in your family ?

(b) What is the expenditure on marriage ?

(c) Is dowry given ? If so, is it in cash or in kind ?

(d) Is the family in debt on account of this ?

IX. RELIGION :

(a) To what religion does the family belong ?

(b) What are the principal deities worshipped ?

(c) What is the expenditure incurred by the family on important religious festivals ?

X. LAND AND CULTIVATION :

(a) Extent of land owned (Acres and cents).

(b) Is it inherited or acquired ?

(c) Does the family possess for itself agricultural implements ? (Numbers and types to be specified).

(d) Are these of the improved or traditional pattern ?

(*e*) What is the type of cultivation adopted? (a) Improved, (b) Traditional.

(*f*) How do you market your surplus produce?

(*g*) Do you have a vegetable garden in your house?

XI. FURNITURE AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

(*a*) What items of furniture are generally in use?

(*b*) Are they of local manufacture or imported from outside?

XII. GENERAL:

(*a*) Do all children between 6—16 attend school regularly?

(*b*) If they do not, how do they occupy themselves?

(*c*) What is the general range of household expenditure per mensem for the family?

(*d*) What are the main items of household expenditure and their proportion to the total?

1. Clothing.
2. Food.
3. Fuel.
4. Lighting.
5. Luxuries (pan, smoking, etc.)
6. Others not specified.

(*e*) What is the outstanding debt?

(*f*) Source from which money is generally borrowed:

Co-operative Society — Rate
Private money lenders — ,,
Governmental agencies — ,,

(*g*) Who is responsible for clearing the debts of a deceased person?

(*h*) Does the family members wear shoes?

(*i*) If so, are they of local manufacture or imported from outside the village?

XIII. SANITATION:

(*a*) Is the house equipped with a bath-room?

(*b*) Where does the household deposit its rubbish?

(*c*) Is the house neatly and cleanly arranged?

(*d*) Do the children urinate or defecate near the house?

APPENDIX II

CENSUS 1961—SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY

Village Schedule

1. Name of village :

2. District/Taluk :

3. Area :

4. No. of households :

5. Distance from nearest town :

6. Distance from nearest Railway Station :

7. Distance from main road :

8. Is it connected by bus ?

9. (*a*) Is there a Post Office/Telegraph Office in the village ?

   (*b*) If not, which is the nearest Post/Telegraph Office and distance at which situated ?

10. Is the village covered by the Community Development Programme ?

11. Is there a Panchayat in the village ?

12. Total Population of the village—1951 & 1961 (& 1941 & 1931, if available)

13. Is the village electrified ?

14. Give the number of births and deaths during the past ten years :

I. HOUSING :

(*a*) What are the common types of house ? (Give a brief description about type of roof, wall, flooring etc.)

(*b*) Are houses owned or rented ?

(*c*) Are the house-sites sufficient for the population ?

(*d*) Do members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes live separately from the others or is there any progress towards their living together?

(*e*) What is the arrangement of houses in the village?

II. LITERACY & EDUCATION:

(*a*) Is there any school in the village? (Specify whether it is Elementary, Higher Elementary, High School and also whether it is a Night or Day school)

(*b*) What is the highest class upto which education is imparted?

(*c*) Who runs the school?

(*d*) Specify the number of students and teachers in each.

(*e*) Is there a Reading room/library in the village?

(*f*) Election—Is it held regularly?

(*g*) Income of Panchayat.

(*h*) Duties of Panchayat.

III. HEALTH & SANITATION:

(*a*) Common diseases of the village.

(*b*) Is native or indigenous medicine practised? If so, by how many?

(*c*) Give your impression of cleanliness. (Inside and outside the houses):

(*d*) Are there any latrines in the village?

(*e*) If there is no latrine, where do the villagers go to answer their calls of nature?

(*f*) What is the source of drinking water?

(*g*) What are the drainage facilities available in the village? Is it adequate?

(*h*) Do villagers send their clothes to the washerman for cleaning?

(*i*) How often do they bathe and what do they use for body cleaning?

(*j*) Was the village affected by epidemics recently like Cholera, Malaria, Smallpox etc. ?

(*k*) What measures were taken to control their outbreak ?

(*l*) When did the last cases of epidemics occur?

(*m*) What diseases are commonly prevalent in this village ?

(*n*) Which is the nearest hospital ?

(*o*) Is there a Primary Health Centre in the village ?

(*p*) Does it have a Maternity Ward ?

(*q*) Where does delivery take place ? At home or in the hospital ?

(*r*) Are there any midwives in the area ?

IV. SOCIAL LIFE :

(*a*) Do the villagers mix freely with each other on all occasions ?

(*b*) Is widow remarriage allowed ?

(*c*) What is the system of inheritance among the villagers ?

(*d*) What are the essential ceremonies that a man undergoes from birth to death ?

(*e*) What are the essential ceremonies that a woman undergoes from birth to death ?

(*f*) How is the body disposed of after death?

(*g*) What is the expenditure incurred on these funeral rites?

V. AGRICULTURE :

(*a*) Total cultivable area :

(*b*) Principal crops grown with their area for ten years :

(*c*) Have the villagers taken to improved methods of cultivation ?

(*d*) What are the sources of irrigation prevalent in the village?

(*e*) Are there any disused tanks in the village? Has any steps been taken to renovate them?

(*f*) Number of pumpsets and irrigation wells:

(*g*) Do people hire out ploughs etc.?

(*h*) What are the usual hire charges?

(*i*) Is there mutual co-operation in agricultural practices?

(*j*) Are chemical fertilisers used?

(*k*) Has there been any crop diseases and pests in the village, during the last three years?

(*l*) State steps taken to solve the problem?

(*m*) Is there any industrial establishment like flour mill, rice mill etc., in the village?

VI. MARRIAGE:

(*a*) At what age are marriages contracted?

(*b*) Write a note on the marriage ceremonies?

(*c*) Is polyandry or polygamy practised?

(*d*) Is divorce granted? If so, by whom and for what reasons?

VII. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES:

(*a*) No of temples/mosques/churches in the village:

(*b*) Do villagers ever join in common worship?

(*c*) What are the main fairs and festivals celebrated?

(*d*) How ancient is the festival? Mention the local legend about the village and the fair or festival?

(*e*) Does this attract people from nearby villages?

(*f*) Mention the name of the deity:

(*g*) What is the duration of the festival?

(*h*) Is any shandy conducted during the festival either in the village itself or in the outskirts?

(*i*) Are communal feasts or free kitchens organised during the festival?

VIII. CO-OPERATION :

(a) Is there a Co-operative Society? What is the nature? (Credit, Marketing etc.)

(b) Total share capital :

(c) Number of members :

(d) Total dues outstanding as on date :

(e) Is there scope for development of co-operative activities?

IX. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES :

(a) What are the recreational facilities available?

(b) Do all villagers participate in these activities?

(c) Is there any play ground in the village? Mention area of play ground :

(d) Is there any Club for sports or recreation? What sports are played and what amenities are provided in the club?

X. LIVESTOCK :

(a) Total number of livestock in the village as per 1956 Livestock Census :

(b) Are there any improved breeds of cattle in the village?

(c) Average milk yield—buffalo/cow

(d) Which is the nearest Veterinary Hospital?

(e) Is there a cattle pound in the village?

(f) Is animal transport used?

XI. GENERAL :

(a) Do villagers tattoo their bodies?

(b) Do villagers favour female education?

(c) Do the children get sufficient quantities of milk?

(d) Number of street lights (Kerosene or Electric lamps to be specified)

(e) Are there any craftsmen in the village?

XII. Is any legend attached to the origin of the village?

XIII. Are there any ancient monuments or places of architectural value in the place? If so, describe them.

APPENDIX III

Glossary of Local Terms

S.No.	Local Terms	Phonetic Transcriptions	English Equivalents
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Agappai	AHAPPAI	Laddle
2.	Asamanai	ASAMANAI	Planks on which the bridal couple are seated.
3.	Bandari	BAṆḌĀRI	Peon of the head of the Okkaliga caste
4.	Chadugudu	CHAḌUGUḌU	Rural game played by young men
5.	Goppamanai	KOPPA MANAI	A shed where stone effigies representing the dead are kept.
6.	Irul	IRUḶ	Darkness
7.	Kalaikothu	KAḶA KOTTU	Weeding implement
8.	Kalappai Vettai	KALAPPAI VĒṬṬAI	Hunting wild animals in groups
9.	Kanangu Pillu	KAṆAṄGU PILLU	A kind of wild grass used for thatching
10.	Kanji	KAÑJI	Gruel made of rice or other cereals
11.	Katta Manae	KĀṬṬĀ MAṆA	A hierarchical head of the Oor Goundan of Okkaligas
12.	Kenakandi	KĒṆA KAṆḌI	An initiating marriage ceremony when seven persons ceremoniously bring water from the nearest water point.
13.	Kilithattu	KIḶITAṬṬU	A rural game played by young men.
14.	Kodi	KŌḌI	New cloth
15.	Kondai	KOṆḌAI	Chignon
16.	Kudi Navithan	KUḌI NĀVIDAN	A superior sect of barbers
17.	Kulam	KULAM	Sept
18.	Kumri	KUMRI	A shifting cultivation practised in the village
19.	Kummi	KUMMI	Dancing especially by young women accompanied by clapping of hands to a tune sung by all.
20.	Langotti	LAṄGŌṬṬI	Loin-cloth
21.	Mammotte	MAMMUṬṬI	Spade
22.	Mathu	MATTU	Churning stick
23.	Moi	MOY	Presentation of cash or gift
24.	Muram	MURAM	Winnowing tray
25.	Navathanyam	NAVADĀNIYAM	Nine grains
26.	Oor Goundan	ŪR KAUṆḌAN	Caste head of the Okkaligas
27.	Oor Kattu	ŪR KAṬṬU	The imposition of social and economic sanction made by the council of elders among Okkaligas, on an offender of social laws
28.	Pandal	PAṆDAL	A temporary structure for shade
29.	Panthatti Viduthal	PĀṆDAṬṬI VIḌUDAL	The ceremony in which the bride is given a send off
30.	Paramapada sopana padam	PARAMAPADA SŌPĀNA PADAM	An indoor game commonly known as 'Snake and ladder'.
31.	Paruppu Choru	PARUPPU CHŌRU	Rice cooked with dhal
32.	Pathi	PADI	Hamlet
33.	Pattakkaran	PĀṬṬAKKĀRAN	The caste head over the Katta Mane
34.	Thali	TĀLI	A sacred symbol of wed-lock among Hindus
35.	Thatti	TAṬṬI	Bamboo matting
36.	Thayathu	TĀYATTU	Talisman
37.	Thazhi	TĀḶI	A large mudpot in which corpses were kept and buried in olden days
38.	Valai	VALAI	Net

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